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NEW X-MEN

PLANET X

WATCH OUT — HERE COMES TOMORROW!

Logan and Cyclops join the mysterious Fantomex in an exploration of the Weapon Plus Program — the secret government project that created Wolverine! But what they find within may be more frightening than their worst nightmares. Next, Magneto — the X-Men's greatest adversary — was thought dead. But now the Master of Magnetism is back, and where he was hiding will shatter the lives of everyone at Xavier's Mansion. If they even survive his latest attack, can the X-Men prevent his planned genocide of the entire human race? Not without a fiery final confrontation with the Phoenix! Once the dust has settled, get ready to flash-forward 150 years into the future and discover an Earth where humanity is decimated — and what's left of the X-Men fight against the forces of genetic homogenization!

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EPIC VOL. 3
2003-2004

MARVEL T+

NEW X-MEN (2001) #142-154

NEW X MEN

PLANET X

VOL. 3

2003-2004

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NEW X-MEN PLANET X VOL. 3

NEW X-MEN #142
"ASSAULT ON WEAPON PLUS PART ONE: WHISKEY & BRIMSTONE"

PREVIOUSLY IN NEW X-MEN...

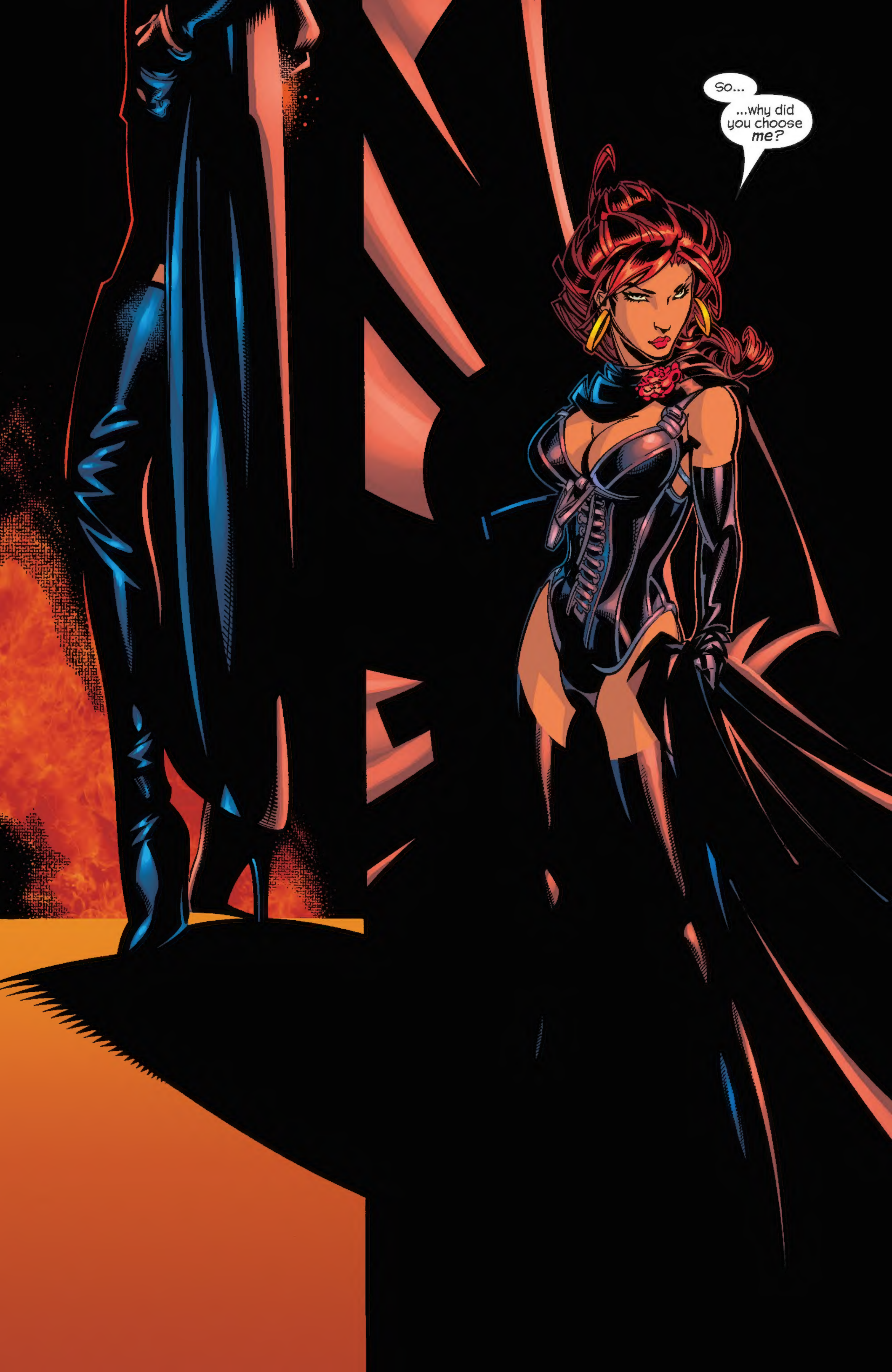
Her name was Emma Frost. She was a remarkably beautiful woman with a mind that was a weapon and a body that could turn into an impenetrable diamond. As a member of the X-Men, she lived and taught at Professor Xavier's school when she wasn't fighting alongside the team as the White Queen. And last month, on the estate created to serve as a safe haven to teach mutants to control their powers, Emma Frost was murdered.

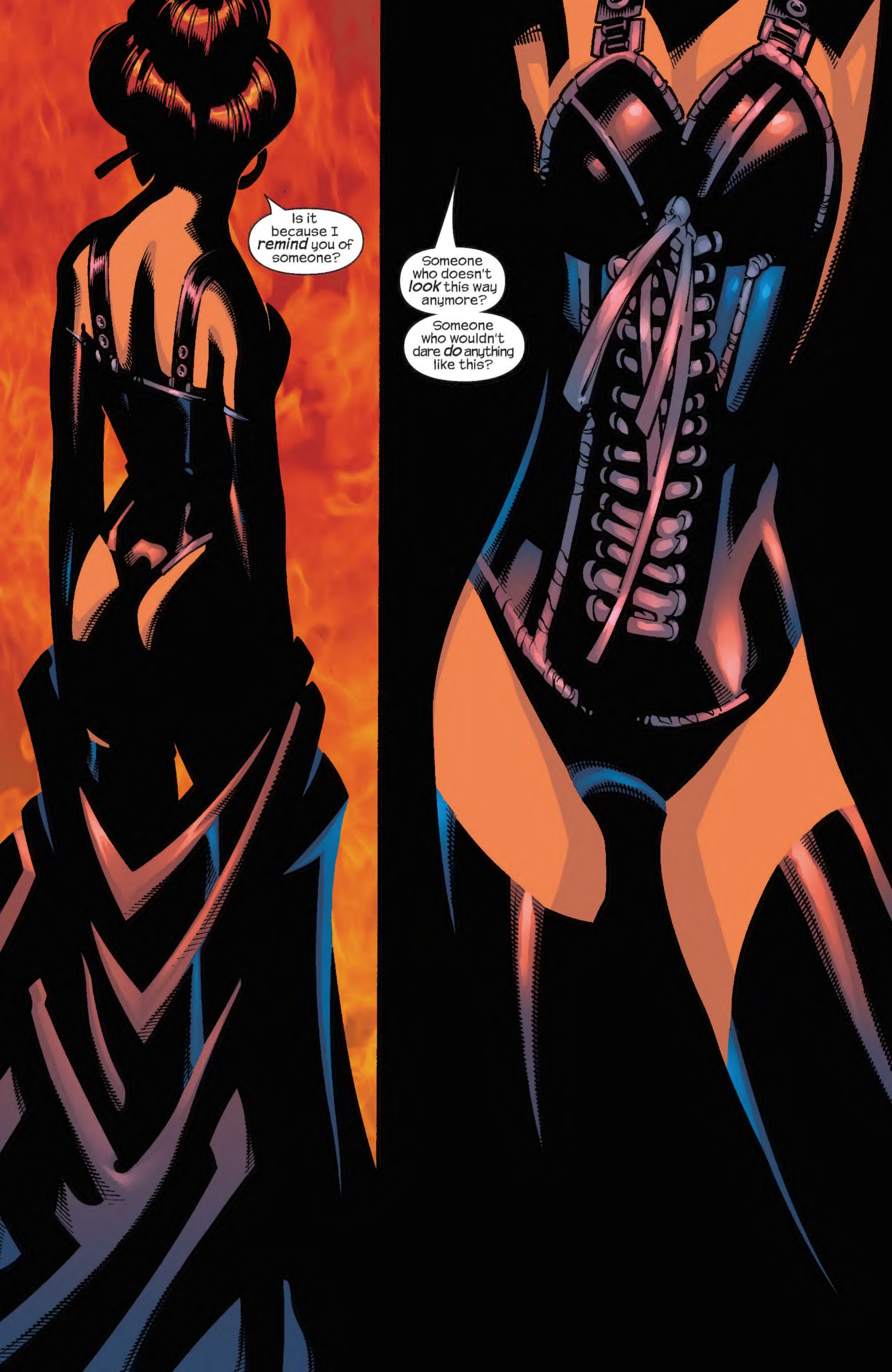
The team found her body shattered into a thousand illuminated fragments spread across the floor. The school was locked down. The investigation began. Two mutant detectives, Bishop and Sage, were brought in to find the murderer. Everyone-including Xavier himself-was a suspect. Was it Scott Summers, the team leader who was having an extramarital telepathic affair with Emma? Or was it Scott's wife, Jean Grey, who "walked in" on Emma and Scott during their supersensory tryst?

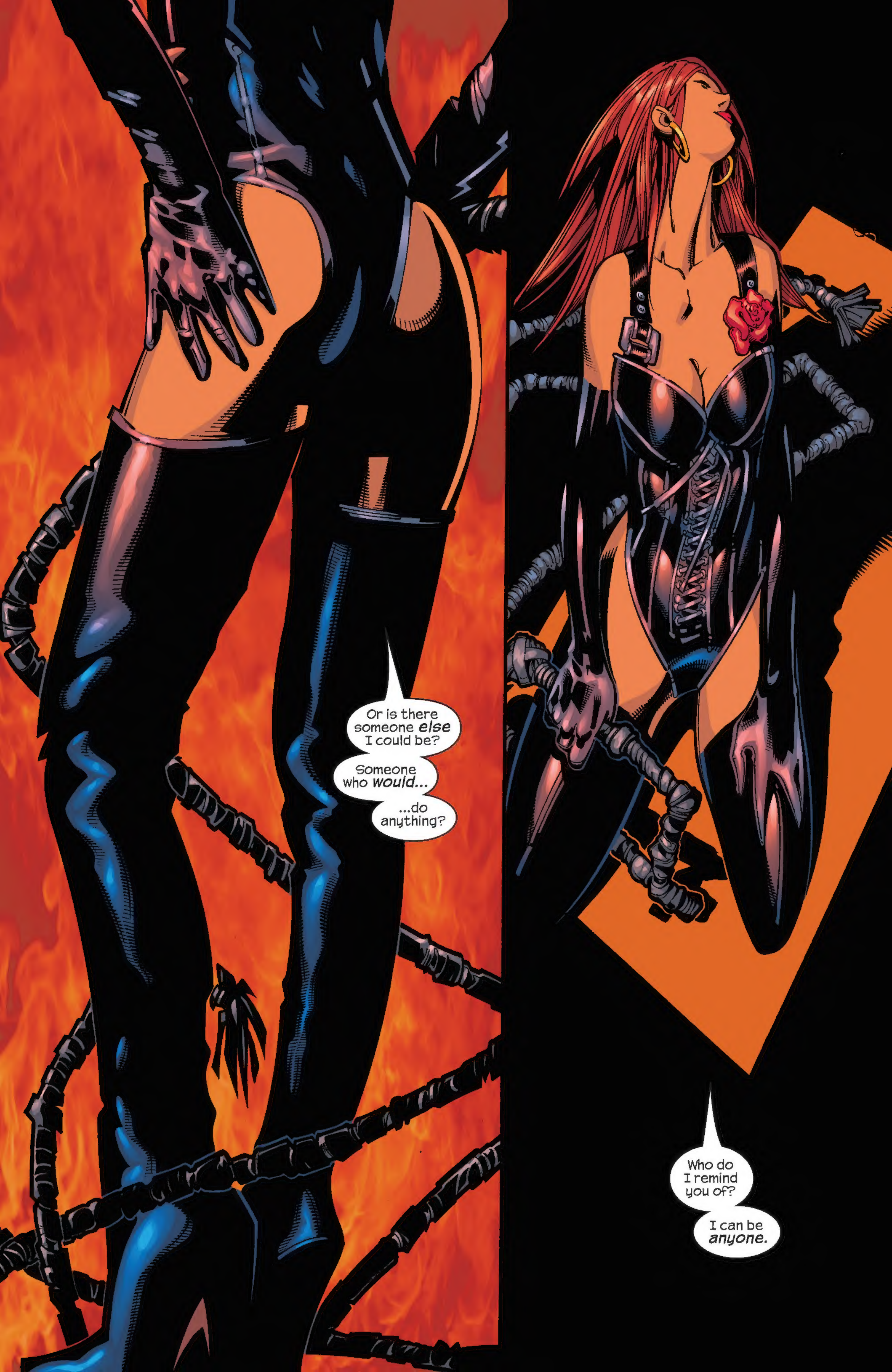
As Sage and Bishop interviewed and interrogated the students and the team, Jean Grey cleared her name by solving the murder in the most uncanny way-by using her remarkable Phoenix powers to reincarnate and reassemble the thousand fragments of diamond into a breathing Emma Frost.

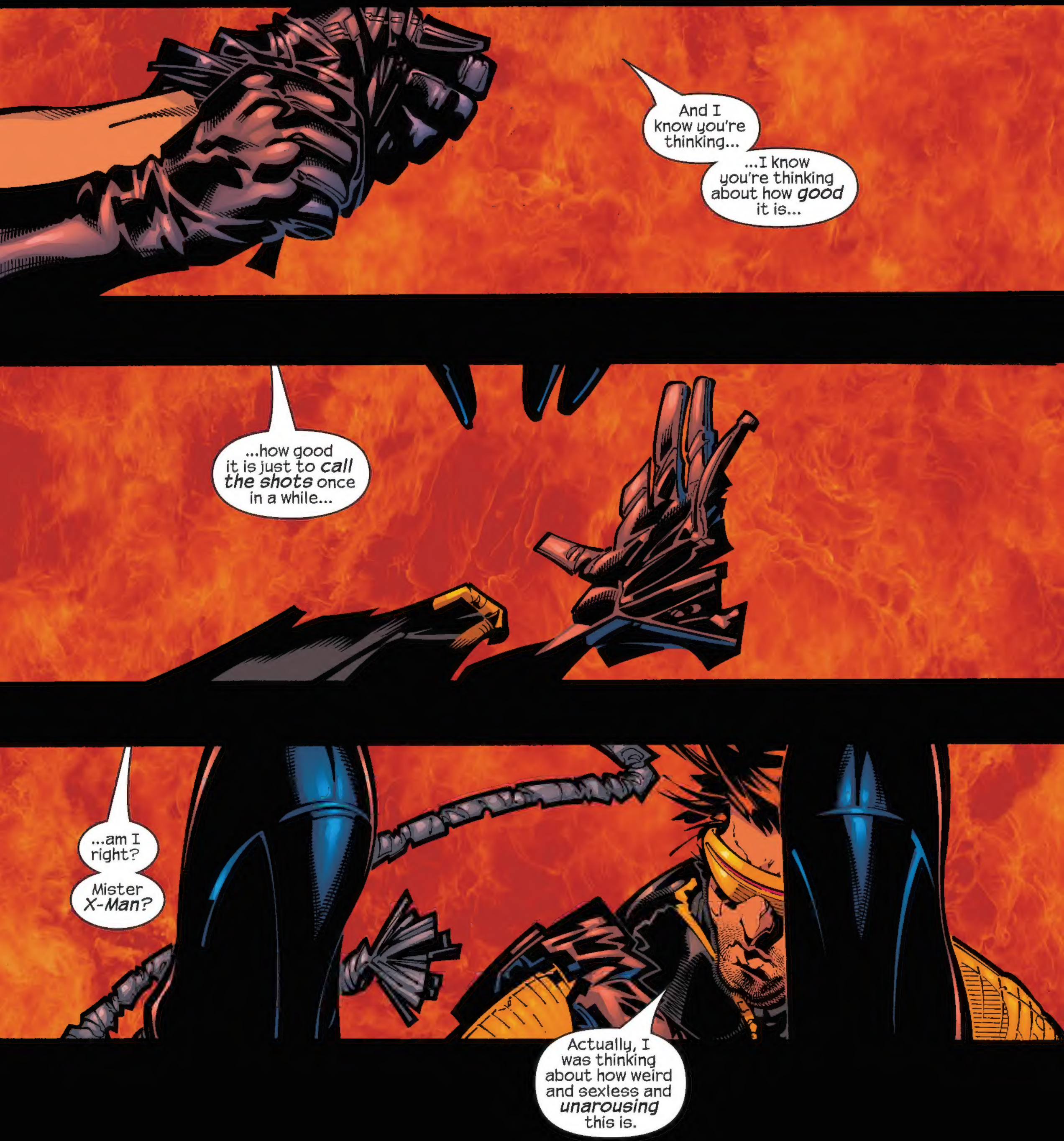
Emma's first words once revived? "Esme!" Esme, her former pupil, who seems somehow mysteriously involved in the shattering of Emma's body and mind. And with Esme at large and the Xavier's mansion still reeling from the murder, another mystery develops...

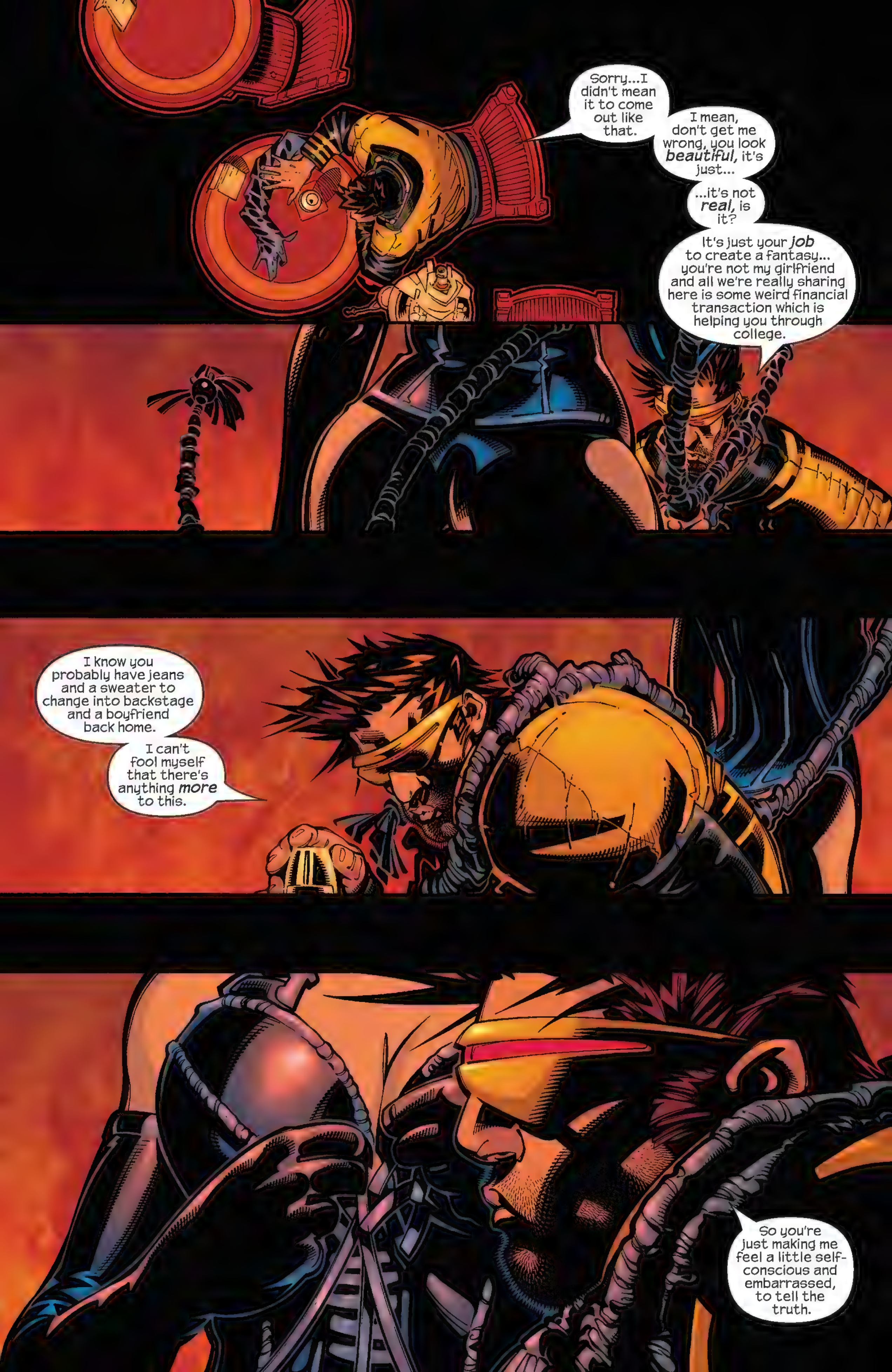
During the investigation, the mutant detective Sage, whose mind is a living computer, was held at gunpoint and knocked unconscious by a mystery suspect. This suspect was at least 6' 2" and male. And Scott Summers is nowhere to be found...

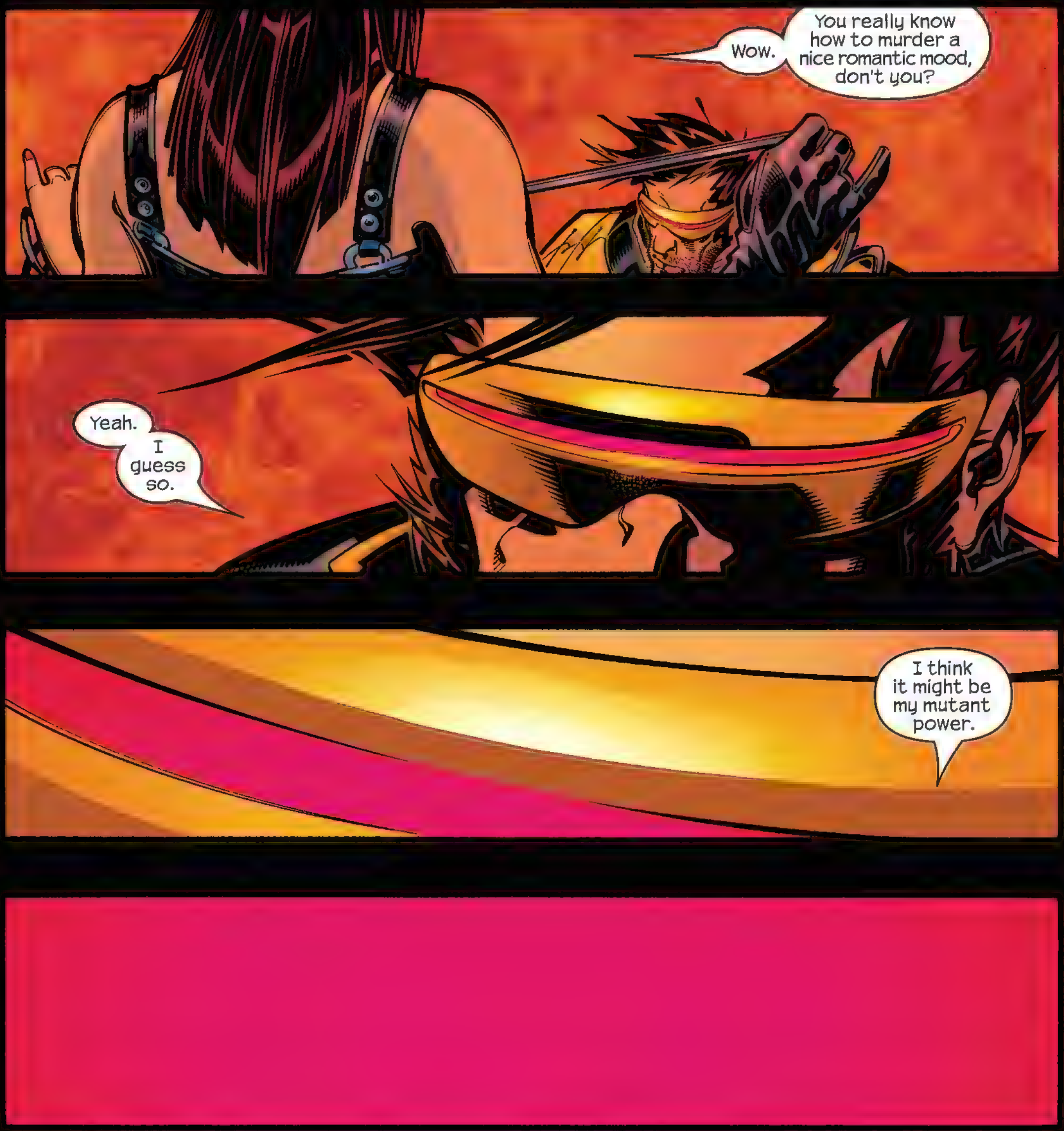

So...
...why did you choose *me?*

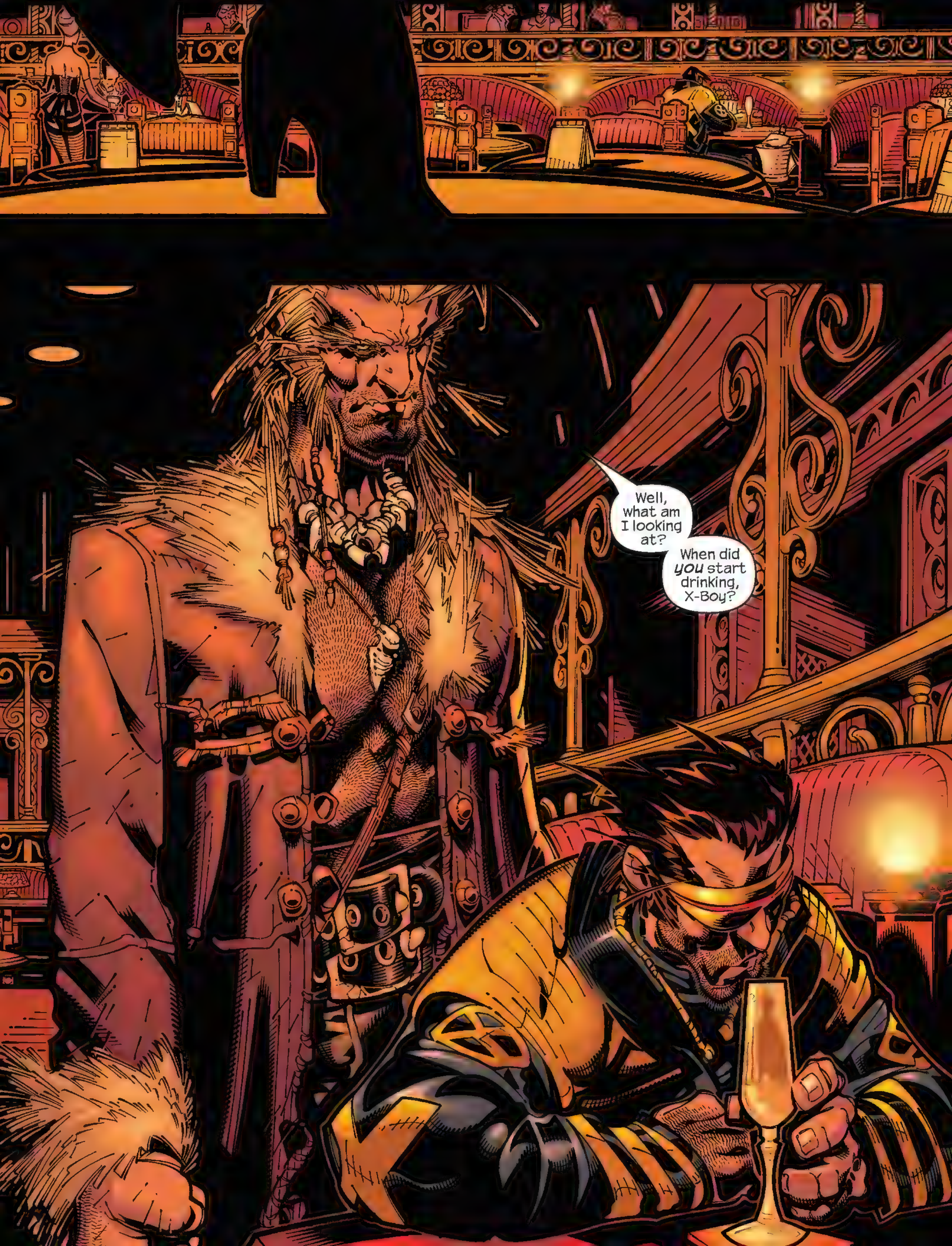

Is it because I *remind* you of someone?
Someone who doesn't *look* this way anymore?
Someone who wouldn't dare *do* anything like this?

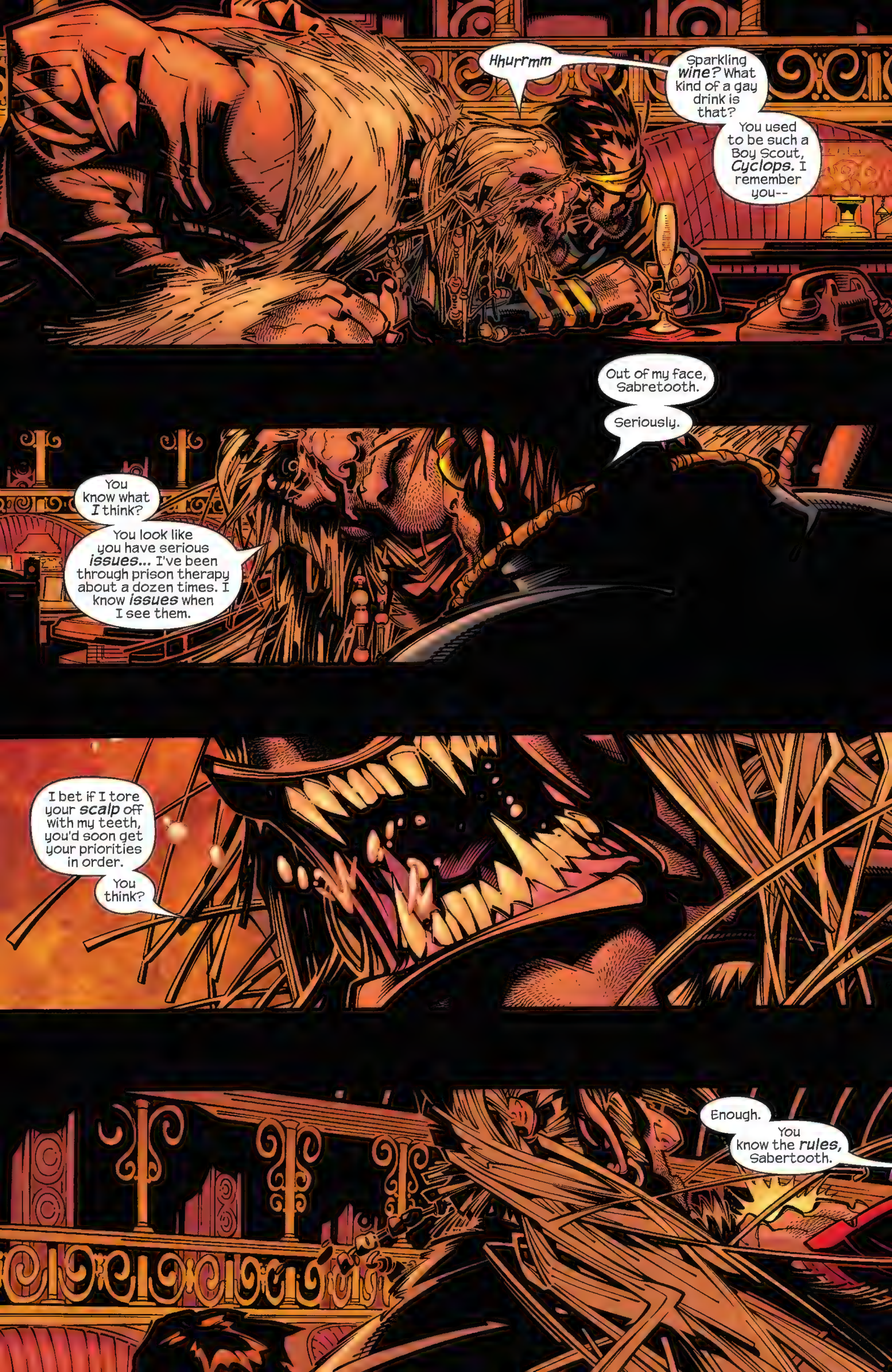

Or is there someone *else* I could be?
Someone who *would...*
...do anything?
Who do I remind you of?
I can be *anyone.*

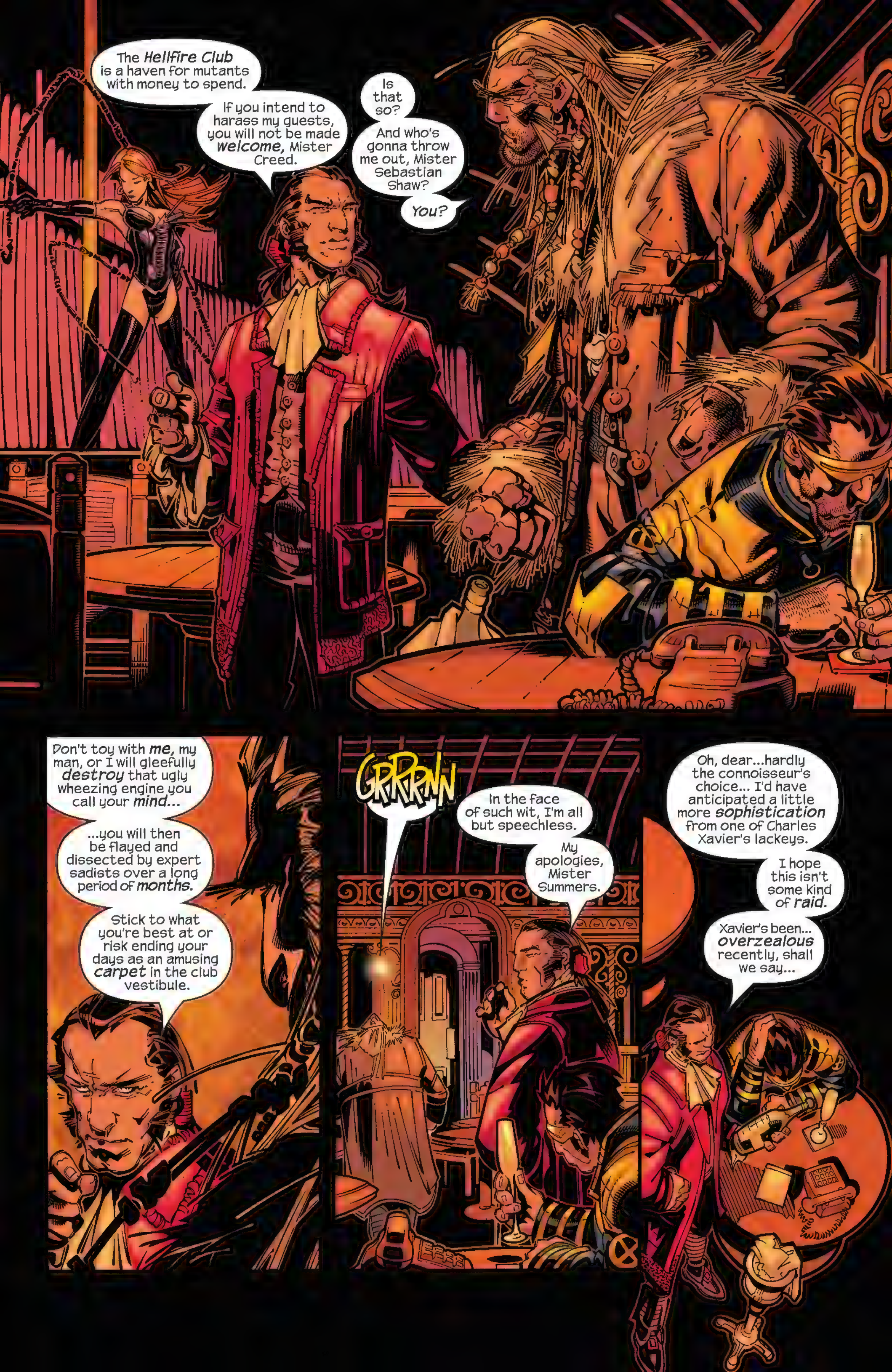

And I know you're thinking...
...I know you're thinking about how *good* it is...
...how good it is just to *call the shots* once in a while...
...am I right?
Mister *X-Man?*
Actually, I was thinking about how weird and sexless and *unarousing* this is.

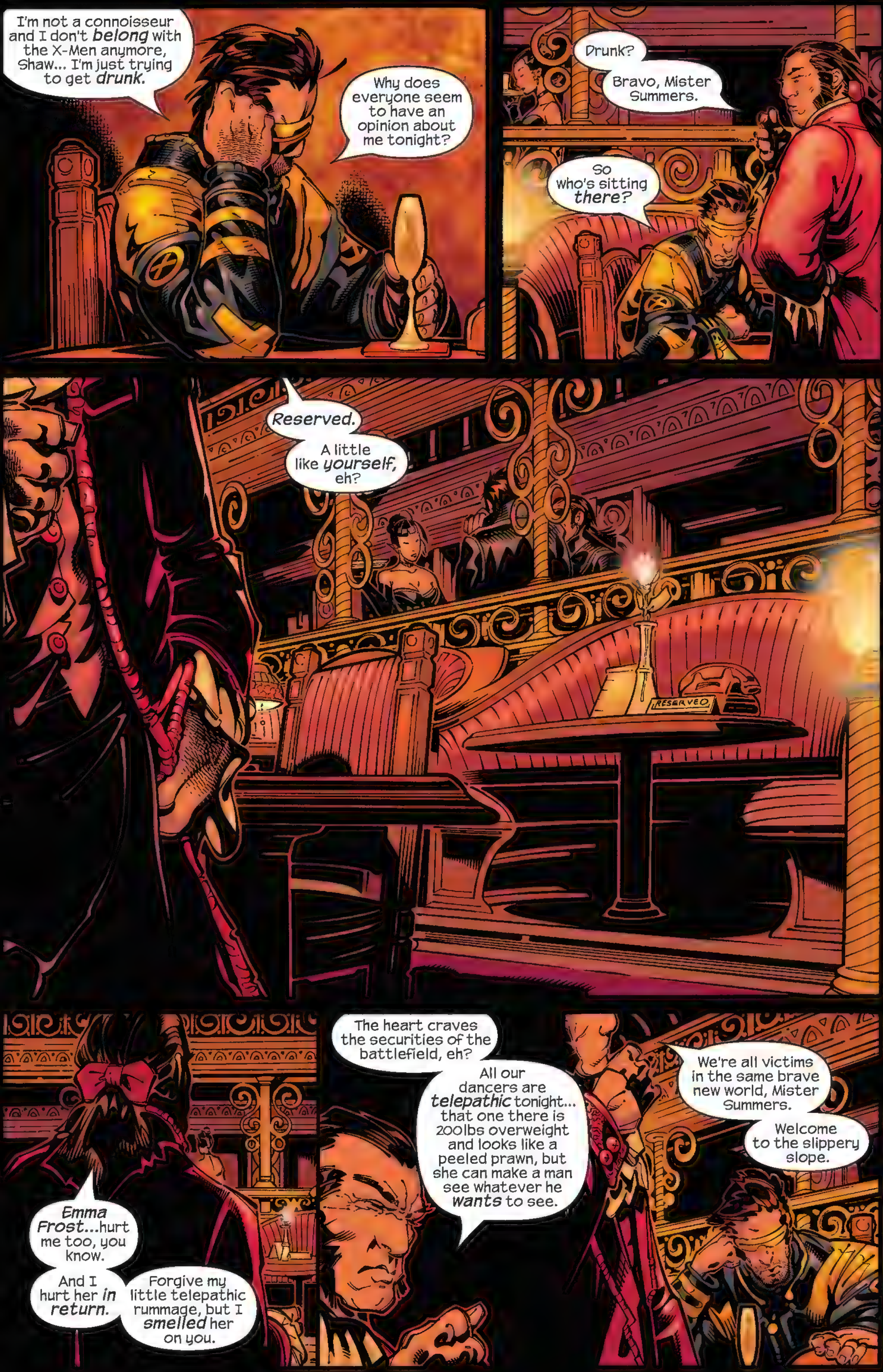

Sorry...I didn't mean it to come out like that.
I mean, don't get me wrong, you look *beautiful,* it's just...
...it's not *real,* is it?
It's just your *job* to create a fantasy... you're not my girlfriend and all we're really sharing here is some weird financial transaction which is helping you through college.
I know you probably have jeans and a sweater to change into backstage and a boyfriend back home.
I can't fool myself that there's anything *more* to this.
So you're just making me feel a little self-conscious and embarrassed, to tell the truth.

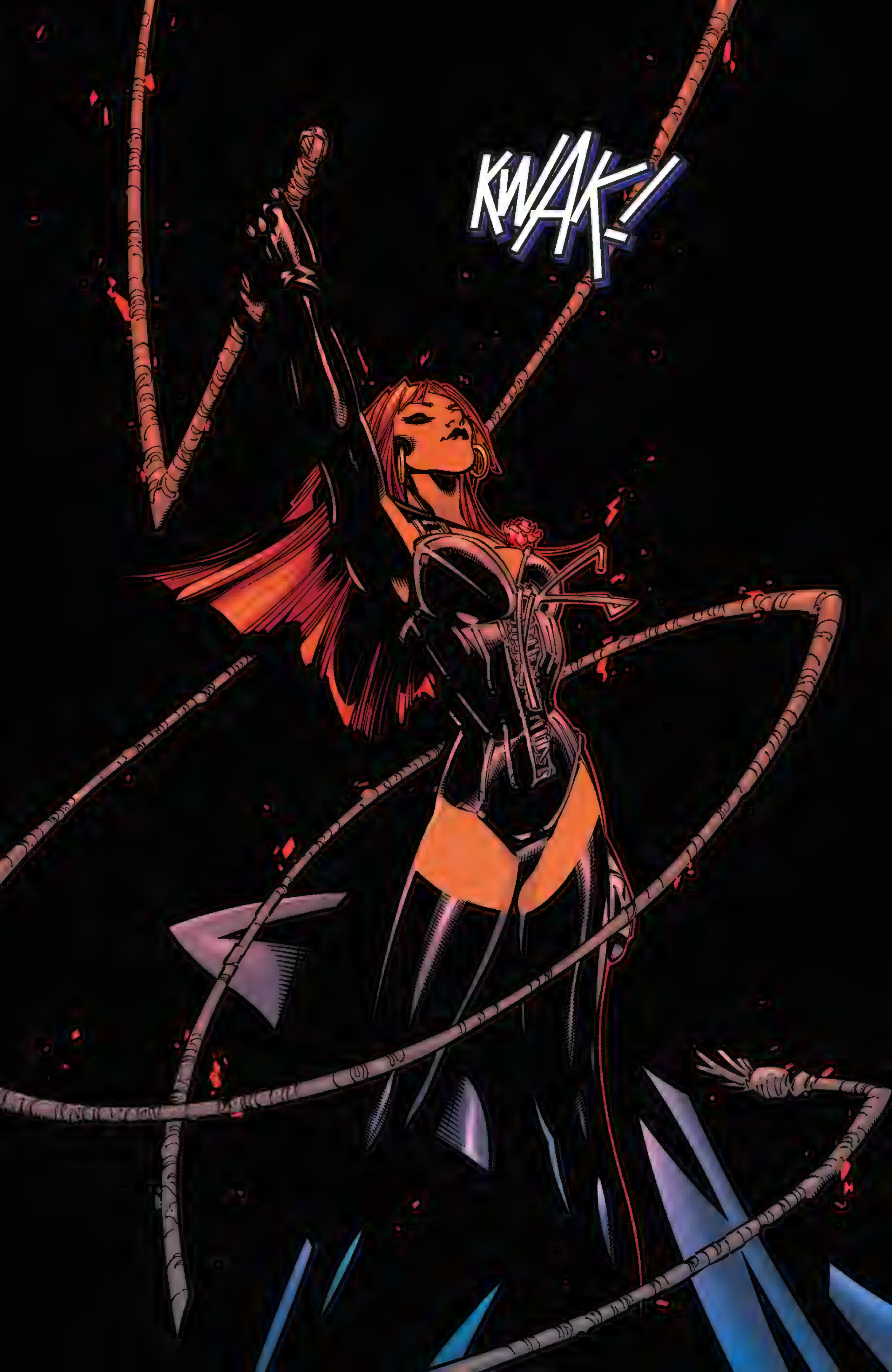

You really know how to murder a nice romantic mood, don't you?
Wow.
Yeah.
I guess so.
I think it might be my mutant power.

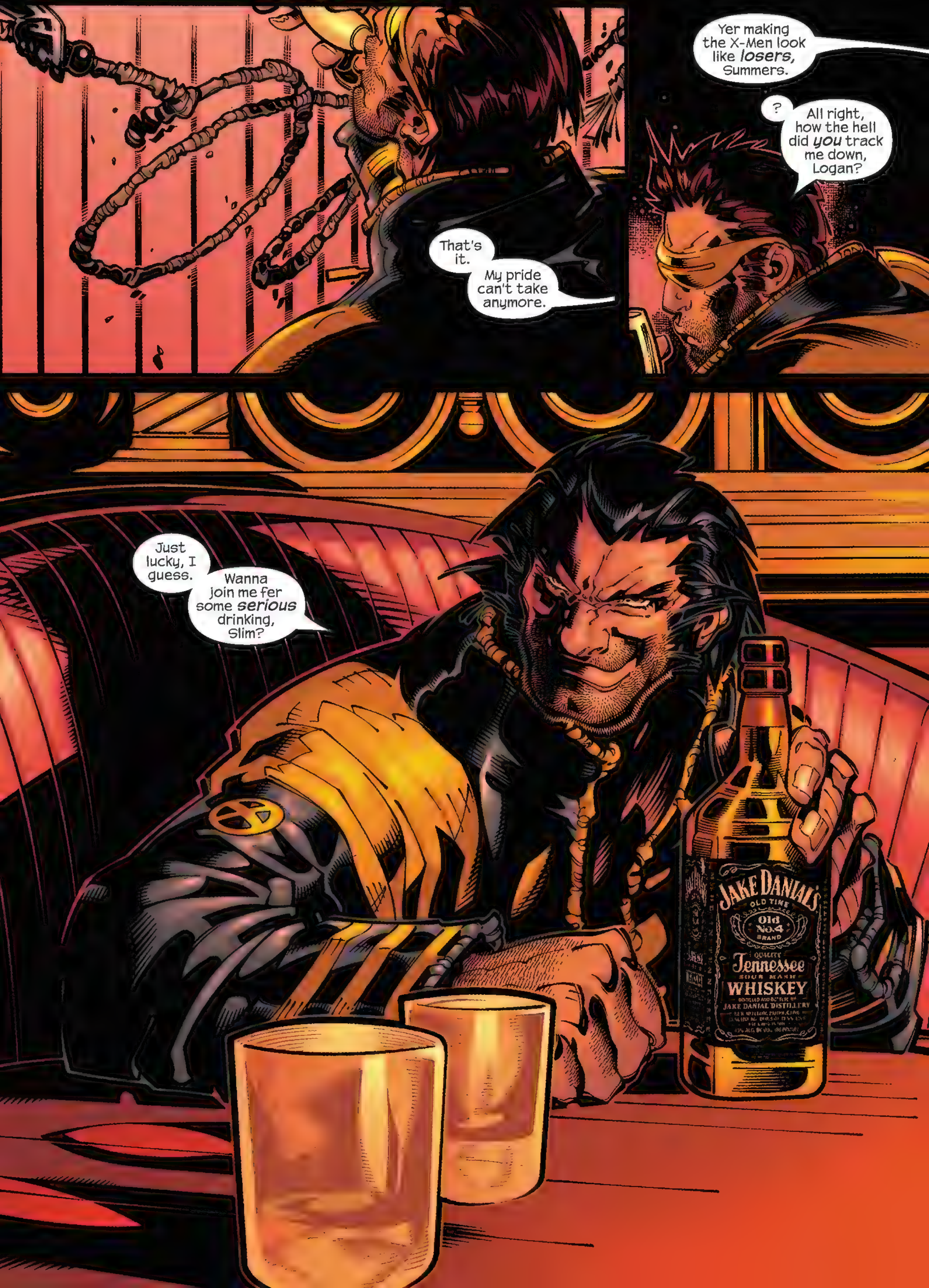

Well, what am I looking at?
When did *you* start drinking, X-Boy?

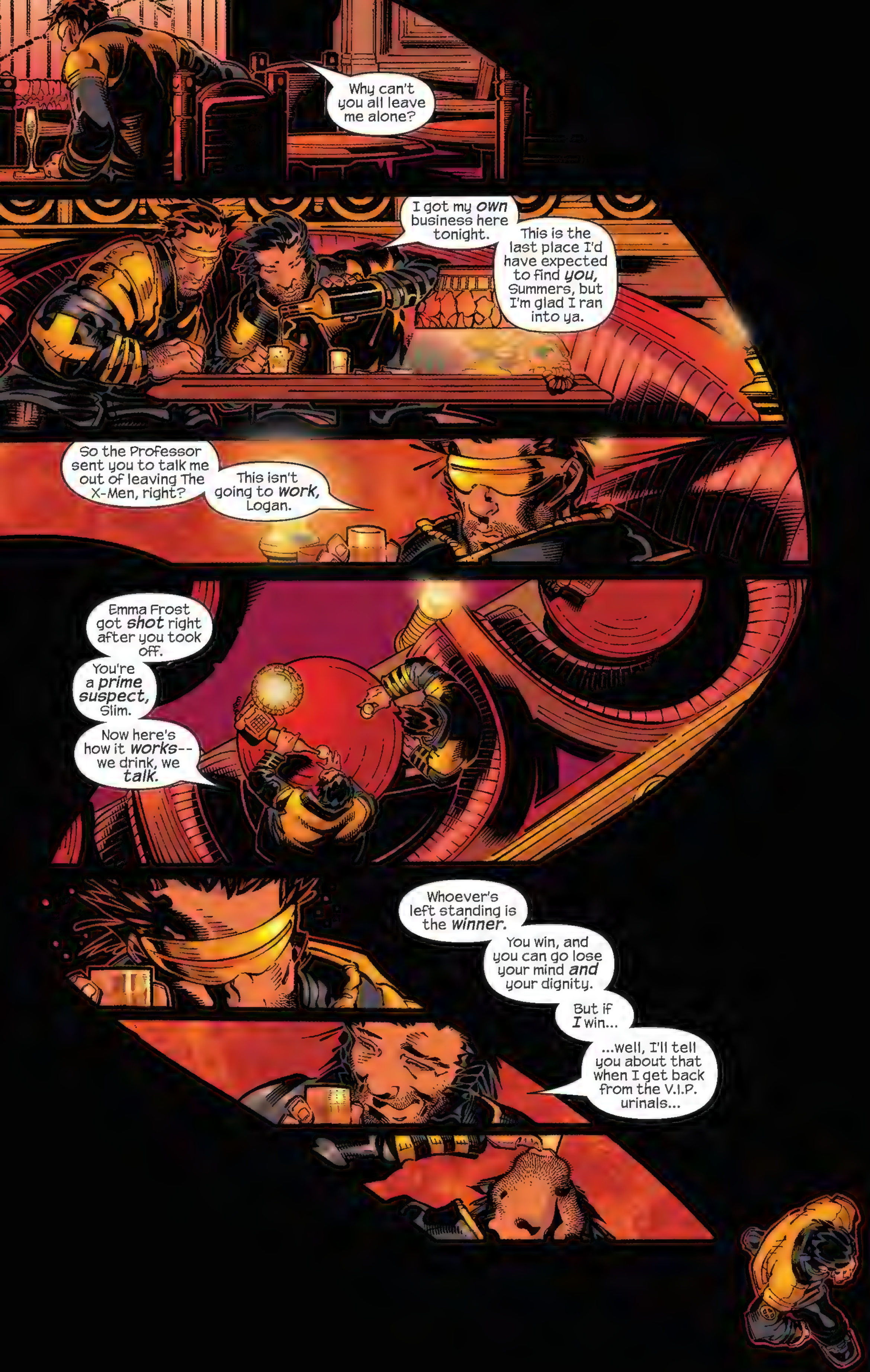

Hhurrmm
Sparkling *wine?* What kind of a gay drink is that?
You used to be such a Boy Scout, *Cyclops.* I remember you--
Out of my face, Sabretooth.
Seriously.
You know what *I* think?
You look like you have serious *issues...* I've been through prison therapy about a dozen times. I know *issues* when I see them.
I bet if I tore your *scalp* off with my teeth, you'd soon get your priorities in order.
You think?
Enough.
You know the *rules,* Sabertooth.

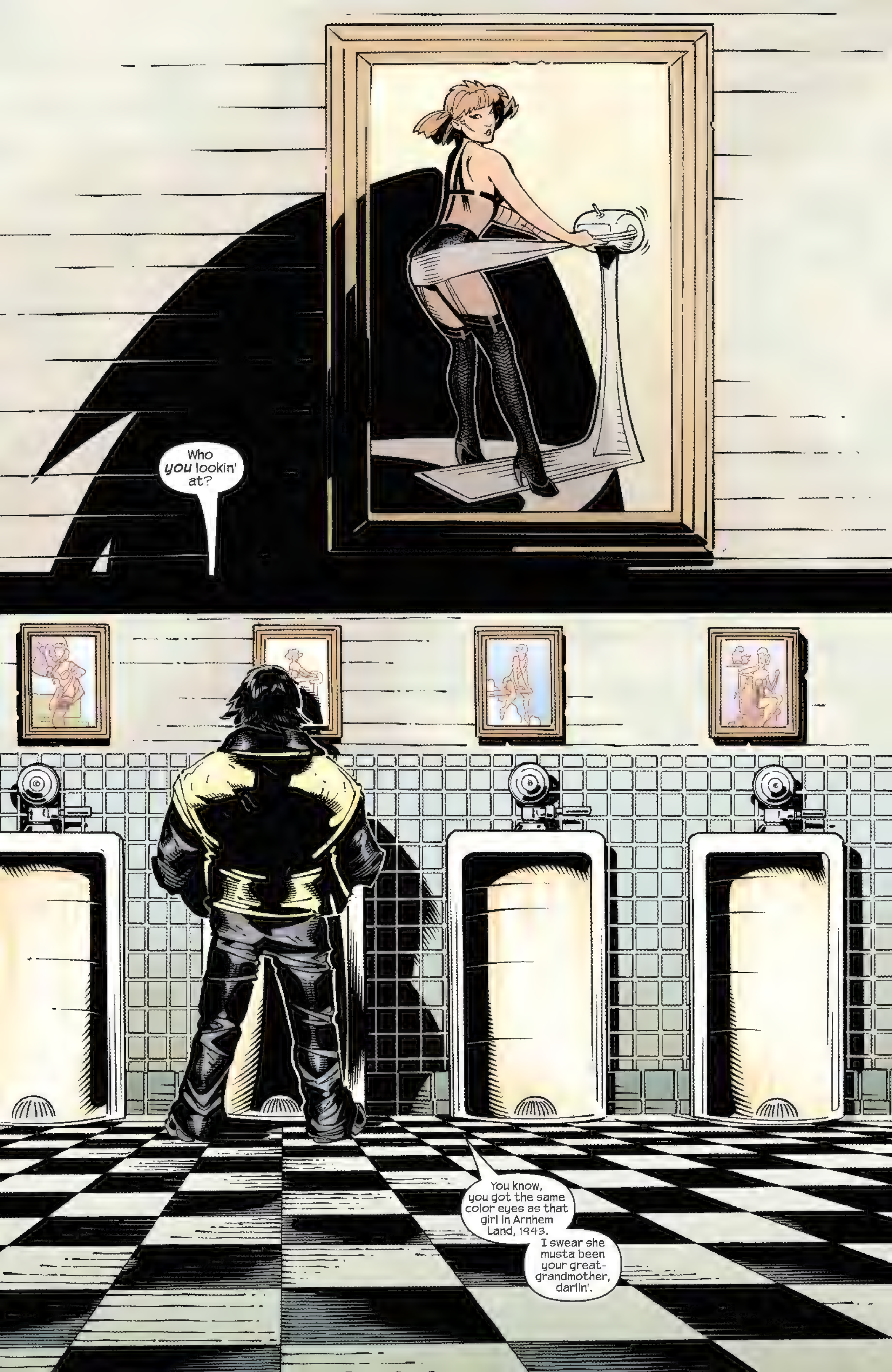

The *Hellfire Club* is a haven for mutants with money to spend.
If you intend to harass my guests, you will not be made *welcome,* Mister Creed.
Is that so?
And who's gonna throw me out, Mister Sebastian Shaw?
You?
Don't toy with *me,* my man, or I will gleefully *destroy* that ugly wheezing engine you call your *mind...*
...you will then be flayed and dissected by expert sadists over a long period of *months.*
Stick to what you're best at or risk ending your days as an amusing *carpet* in the club vestibule.
GRRRNN
In the face of such wit, I'm all but speechless.
My apologies, Mister Summers.
Oh, dear...hardly the connoisseur's choice... I'd have anticipated a little more *sophistication* from one of Charles Xavier's lackeys.
I hope this isn't some kind of *raid.*
Xavier's been... *overzealous* recently, shall we say...

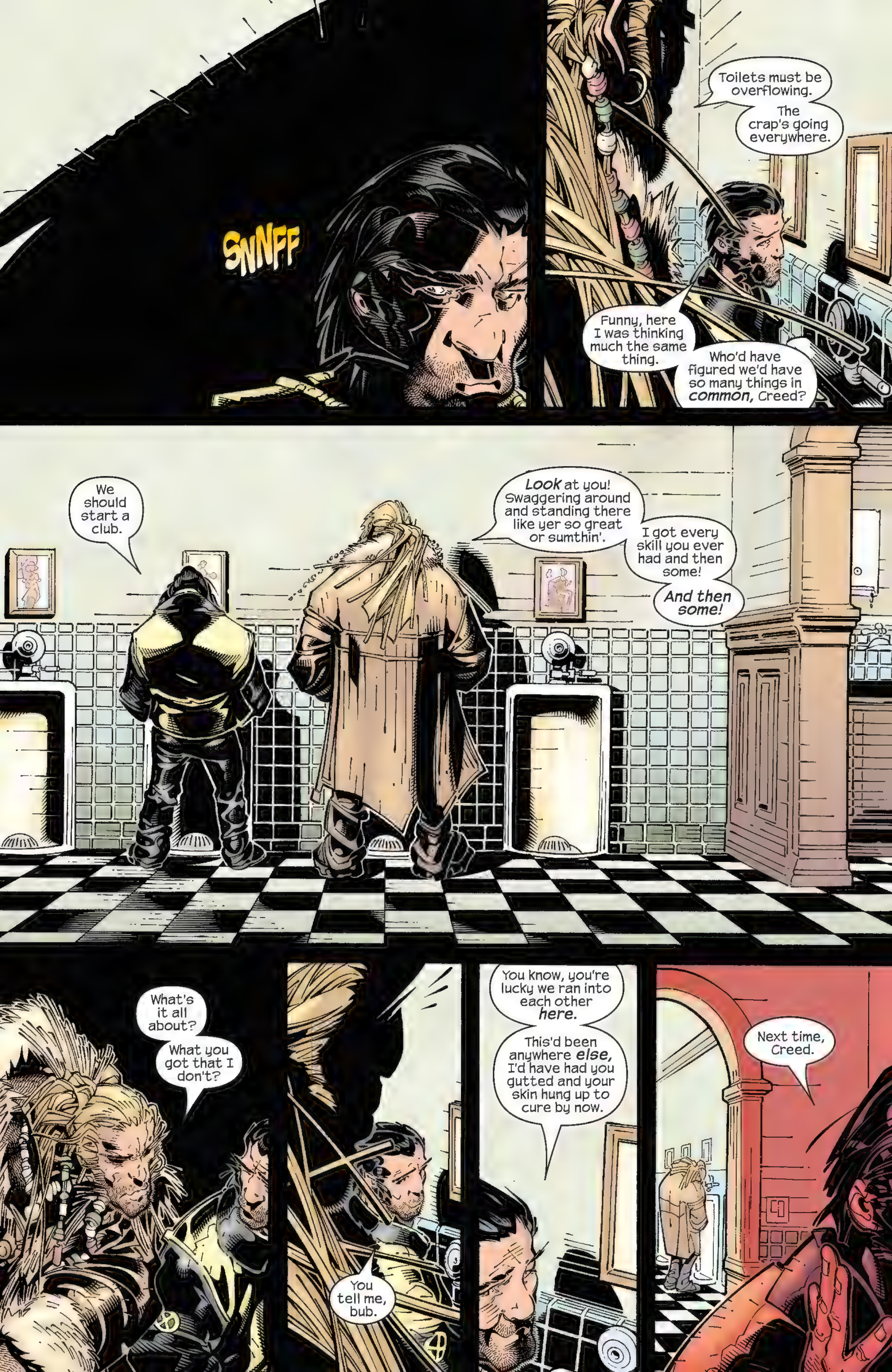

I'm not a connoisseur and I don't *belong* with the X-Men anymore, Shaw... I'm just trying to get *drunk.*
Why does everyone seem to have an opinion about me tonight?
Drunk?
Bravo, Mister Summers.
So who's sitting *there?*
Reserved.
A little like *yourself,* eh?
RESERVED
Emma Frost...hurt me too, you know.
And I hurt her *in return.*
Forgive my little telepathic rummage, but I *smelled* her on you.
The heart craves the securities of the battlefield, eh?
All our dancers are *telepathic* tonight... that one there is 200lbs overweight and looks like a peeled prawn, but she can make a man see whatever he *wants* to see.
We're all victims in the same brave new world, Mister Summers.
Welcome to the slippery slope.

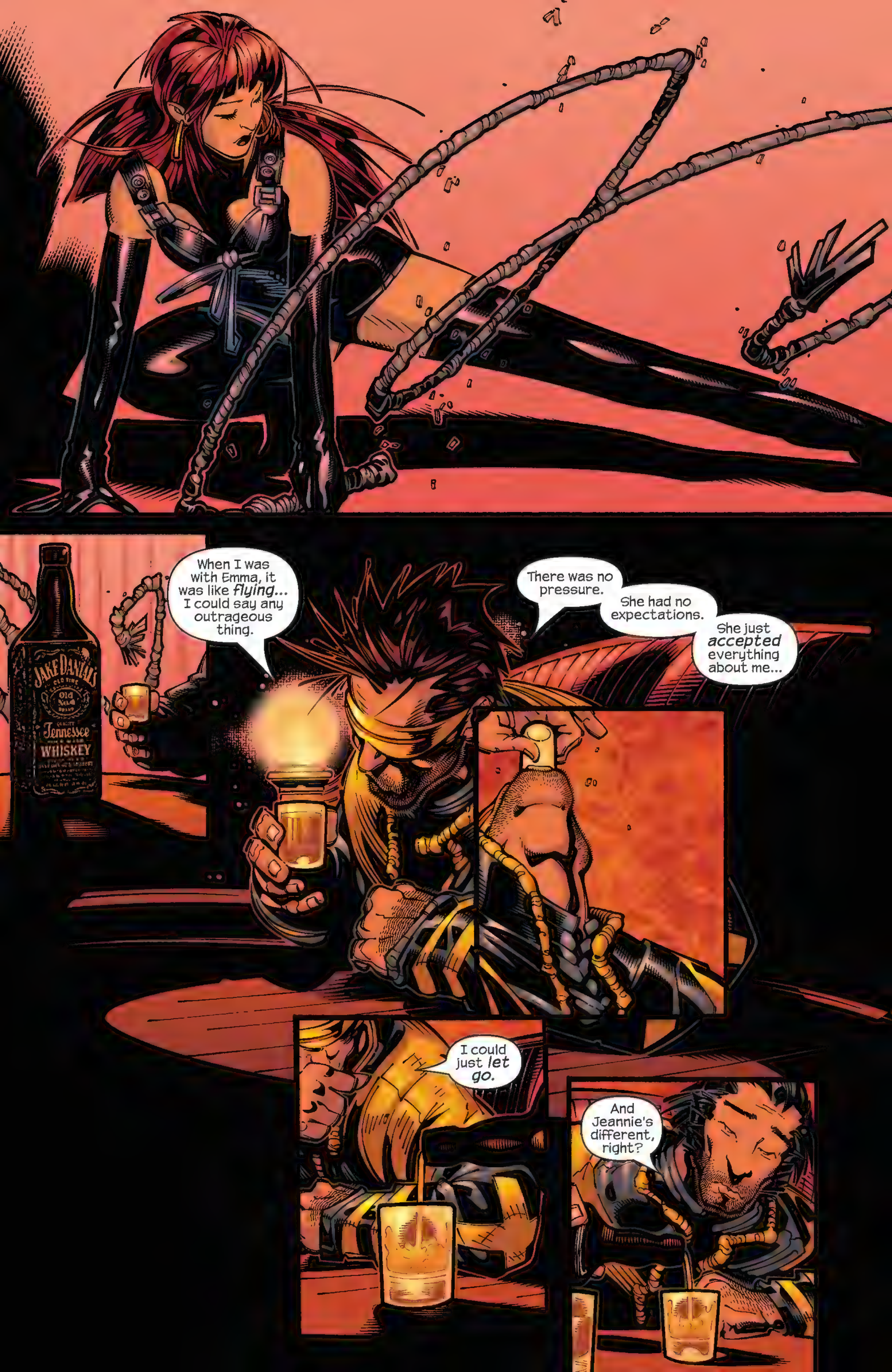

KWAK!

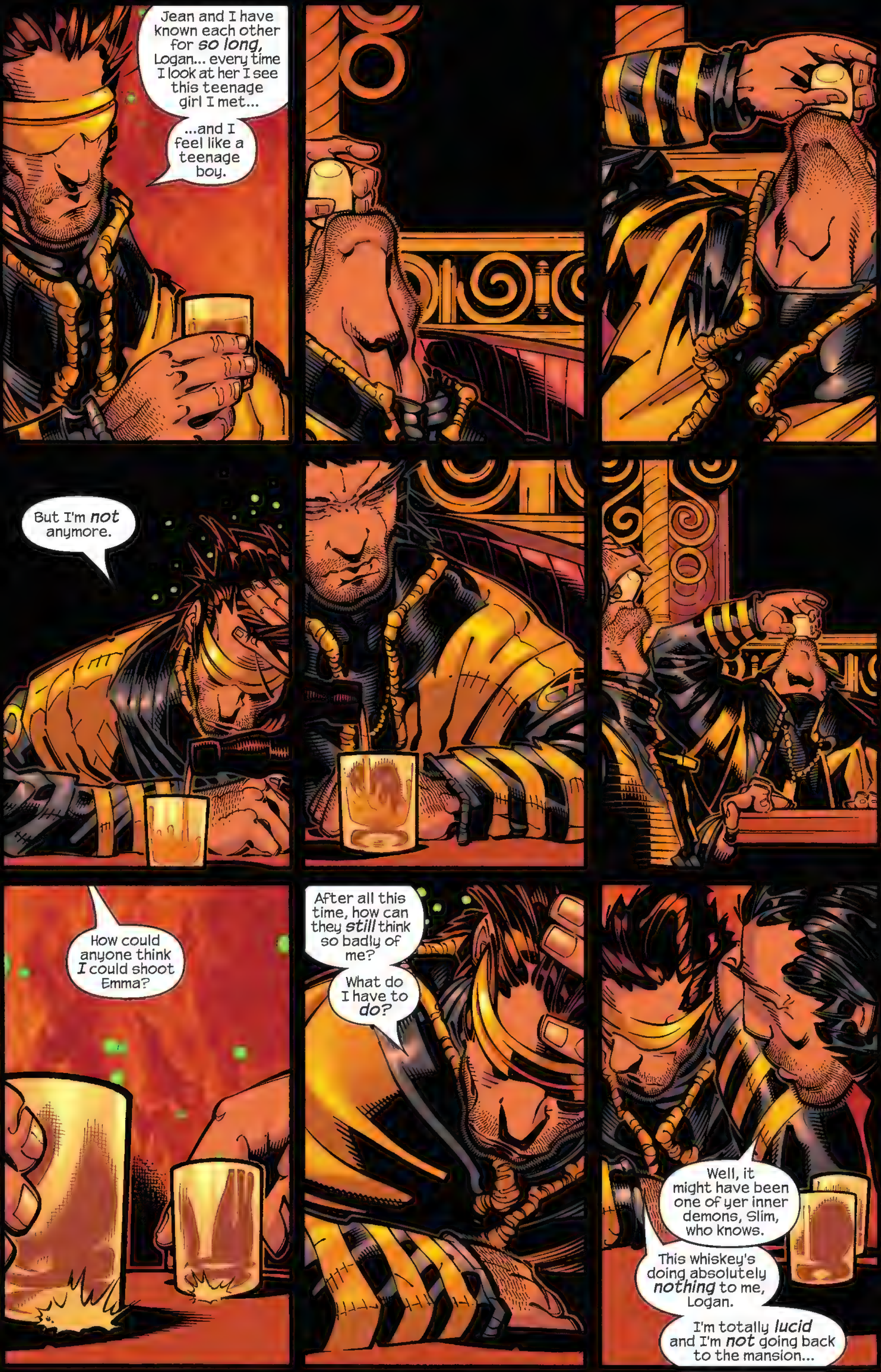

That's it.
My pride can't take anymore.
Yer making the X-Men look like *losers,* Summers.
?
All right, how the hell did *you* track me down, Logan?
Just lucky, I guess.
Wanna join me fer some *serious* drinking, Slim?
JAKE DANIAL'S
OLD TIME
Old No.4
BRAND
QUALITY
Tennessee
SOUR MASH
WHISKEY
JAKE DANIAL DISTILLERY

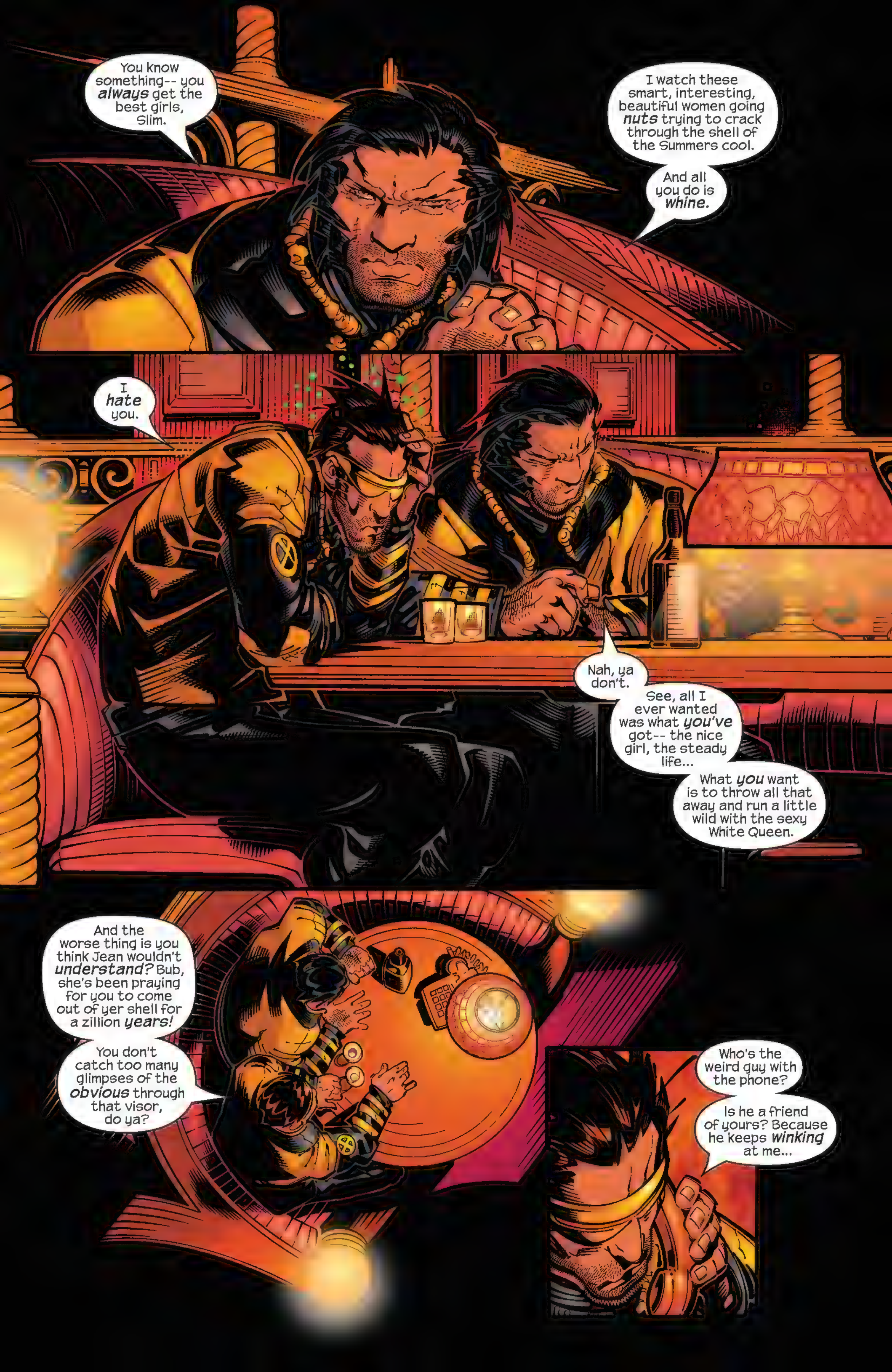

Why can't you all leave me alone?
I got my *own* business here tonight.
This is the last place I'd have expected to find *you,* Summers, but I'm glad I ran into ya.
So the Professor sent you to talk me out of leaving The X-Men, right?
This isn't going to *work,* Logan.
Emma Frost got *shot* right after you took off.
You're a *prime suspect,* Slim.
Now here's how it *works*-- we drink, we *talk.*
Whoever's left standing is the *winner.*
You win, and you can go lose your mind *and* your dignity.
But if *I* win...
...well, I'll tell you about that when I get back from the V.I.P. urinals...

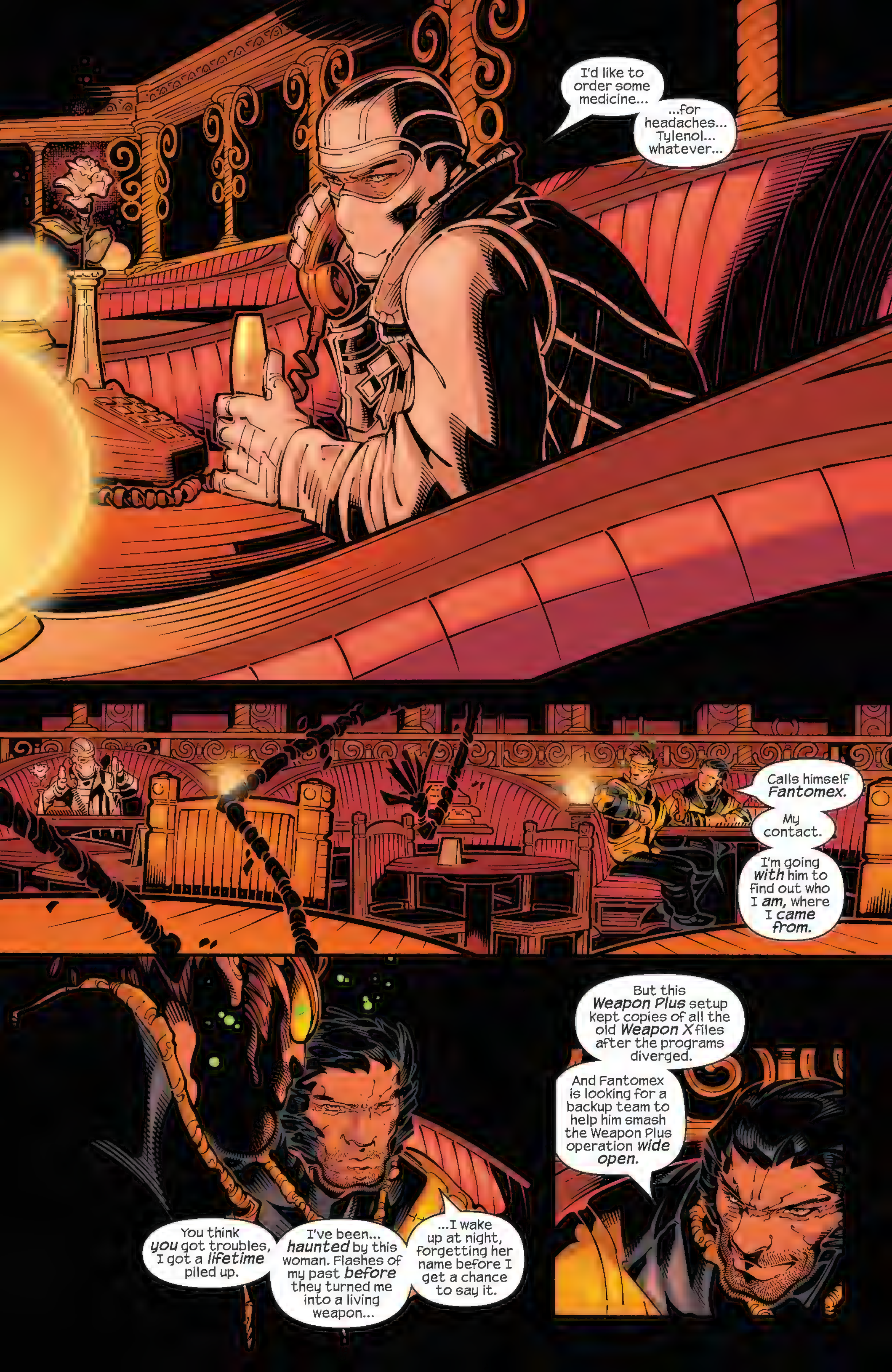

Who *you* lookin' at?
You know, you got the same color eyes as that girl in Arnhem Land, 1943.
I swear she musta been your great-grandmother, darlin'.

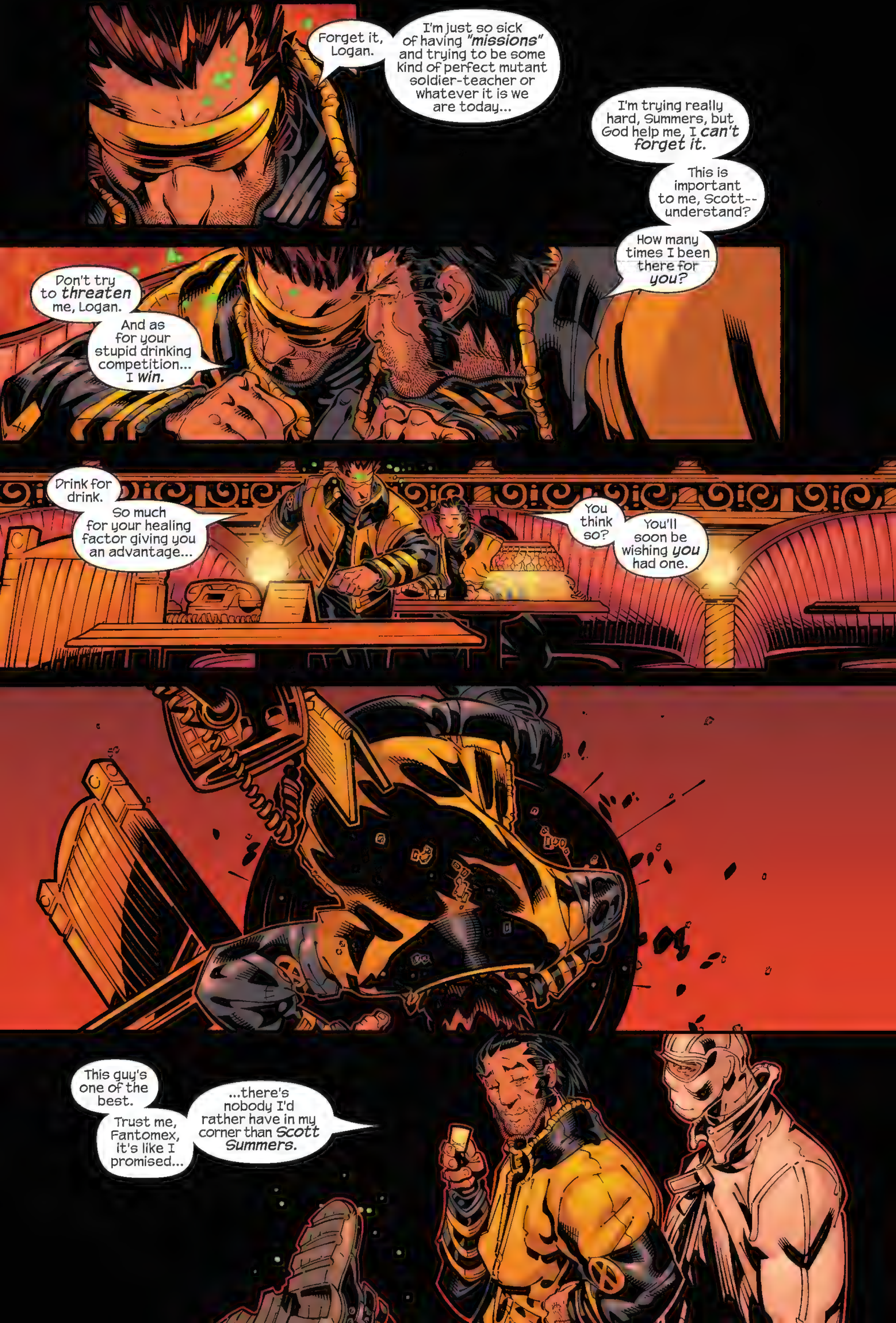

SNNFF
Toilets must be overflowing.
The crap's going everywhere.
Funny, here I was thinking much the same thing.
Who'd have figured we'd have so many things in *common,* Creed?
We should start a club.
Look at you! Swaggering around and standing there like yer so great or sumthin'.
I got every skill you ever had and then some!
And then some!
What's it all about?
What you got that I don't?
You tell me, bub.
You know, you're lucky we ran into each other *here.*
This'd been anywhere *else,* I'd have had you gutted and your skin hung up to cure by now.
Next time, Creed.

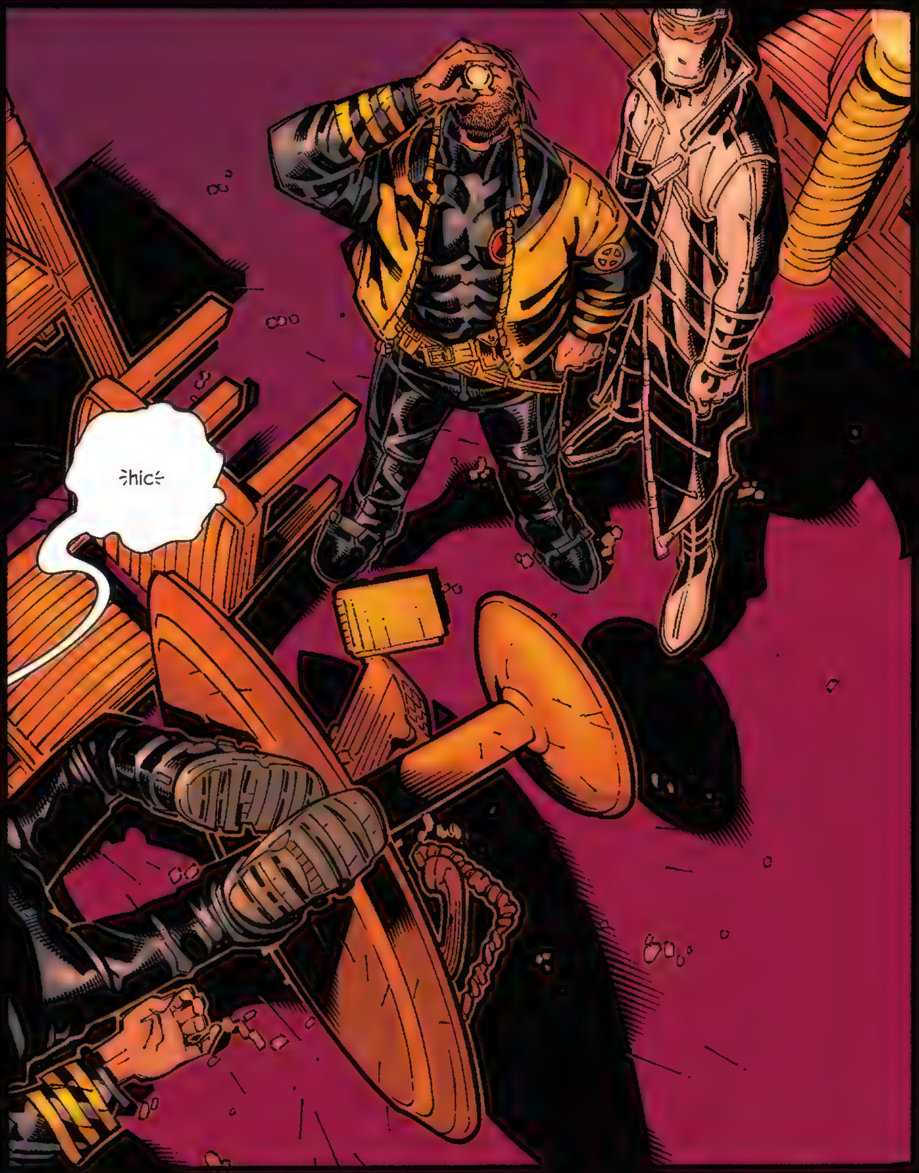

When I was with Emma, it was like *flying*... I could say any outrageous thing.
There was no pressure.
She had no expectations.
She just ***accepted*** everything about me...
JAKE DANIELS
Old No.
Tennessee
WHISKEY
I could just ***let go.***
And Jeannie's different, right?


Jean and I have known each other for *so long,* Logan... every time I look at her I see this teenage girl I met...
...and I feel like a teenage boy.
But I'm *not* anymore.
How could anyone think *I* could shoot Emma?
After all this time, how can they *still* think so badly of me?
What do I have to *do?*
Well, it might have been one of yer inner demons, Slim, who knows.
This whiskey's doing absolutely *nothing* to me, Logan.
I'm totally *lucid* and I'm *not* going back to the mansion...

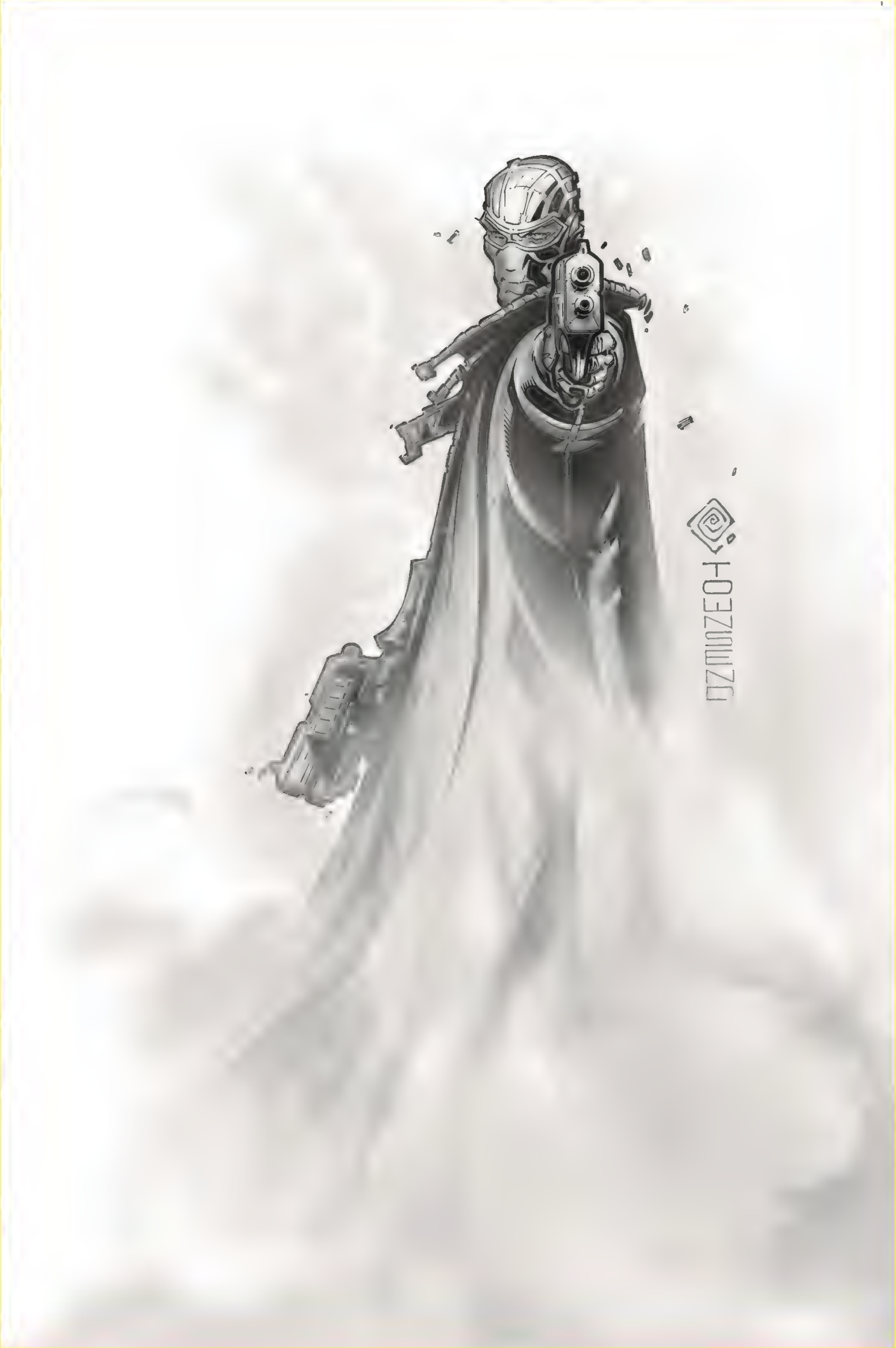

You know something-- you *always* get the best girls, Slim.
I watch these smart, interesting, beautiful women going *nuts* trying to crack through the shell of the Summers cool.
And all you do is *whine.*
I *hate* you.
Nah, ya don't.
See, all I ever wanted was what *you've* got-- the nice girl, the steady life...
What *you* want is to throw all that away and run a little wild with the sexy White Queen.
And the worse thing is you think Jean wouldn't *understand?* Bub, she's been praying for you to come out of yer shell for a zillion *years!*
You don't catch too many glimpses of the *obvious* through that visor, do ya?
Who's the weird guy with the phone?
Is he a friend of yours? Because he keeps *winking* at me...


I'd like to order some medicine...
...for headaches... Tylenol... whatever...
Calls himself *Fantomex.*
My contact.
I'm going *with* him to find out who I *am,* where I *came from.*
But this *Weapon Plus* setup kept copies of all the old *Weapon X* files after the programs diverged.
And Fantomex is looking for a backup team to help him smash the Weapon Plus operation *wide open.*
You think *you* got troubles, I got a *lifetime* piled up.
I've been... *haunted* by this woman. Flashes of my past *before* they turned me into a living weapon...
...I wake up at night, forgetting her name before I get a chance to say it.


Forget it, Logan.
I'm just so sick of having *"missions"* and trying to be some kind of perfect mutant soldier-teacher or whatever it is we are today...
I'm trying really hard, Summers, but God help me, I *can't forget it.*
This is important to me, Scott-- understand?
How many times I been there for *you?*
Don't try to *threaten* me, Logan.
And as for your stupid drinking competition... I *win.*
Drink for drink.
So much for your healing factor giving you an advantage...
You think so?
You'll soon be wishing *you* had one.
This guy's one of the best.
Trust me, Fantomex, it's like I promised...
...there's nobody I'd rather have in my corner than *Scott Summers.*

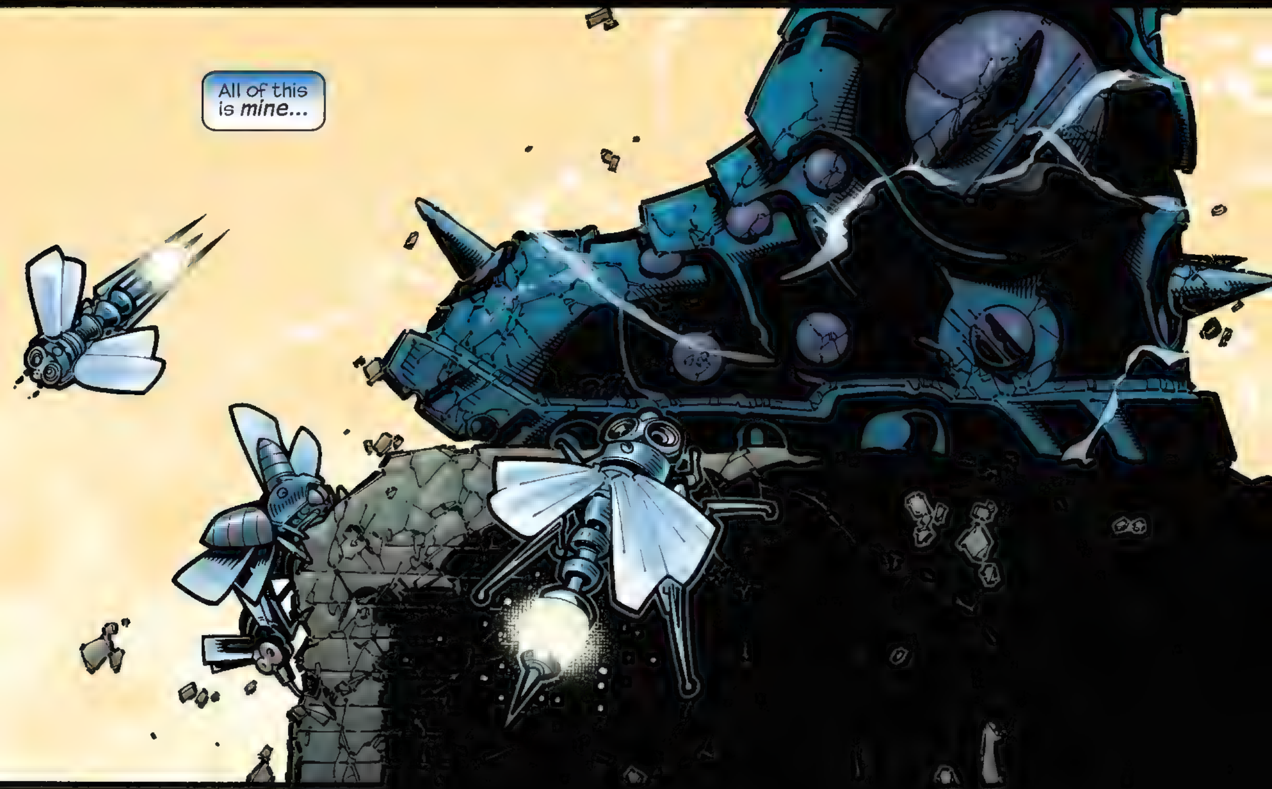


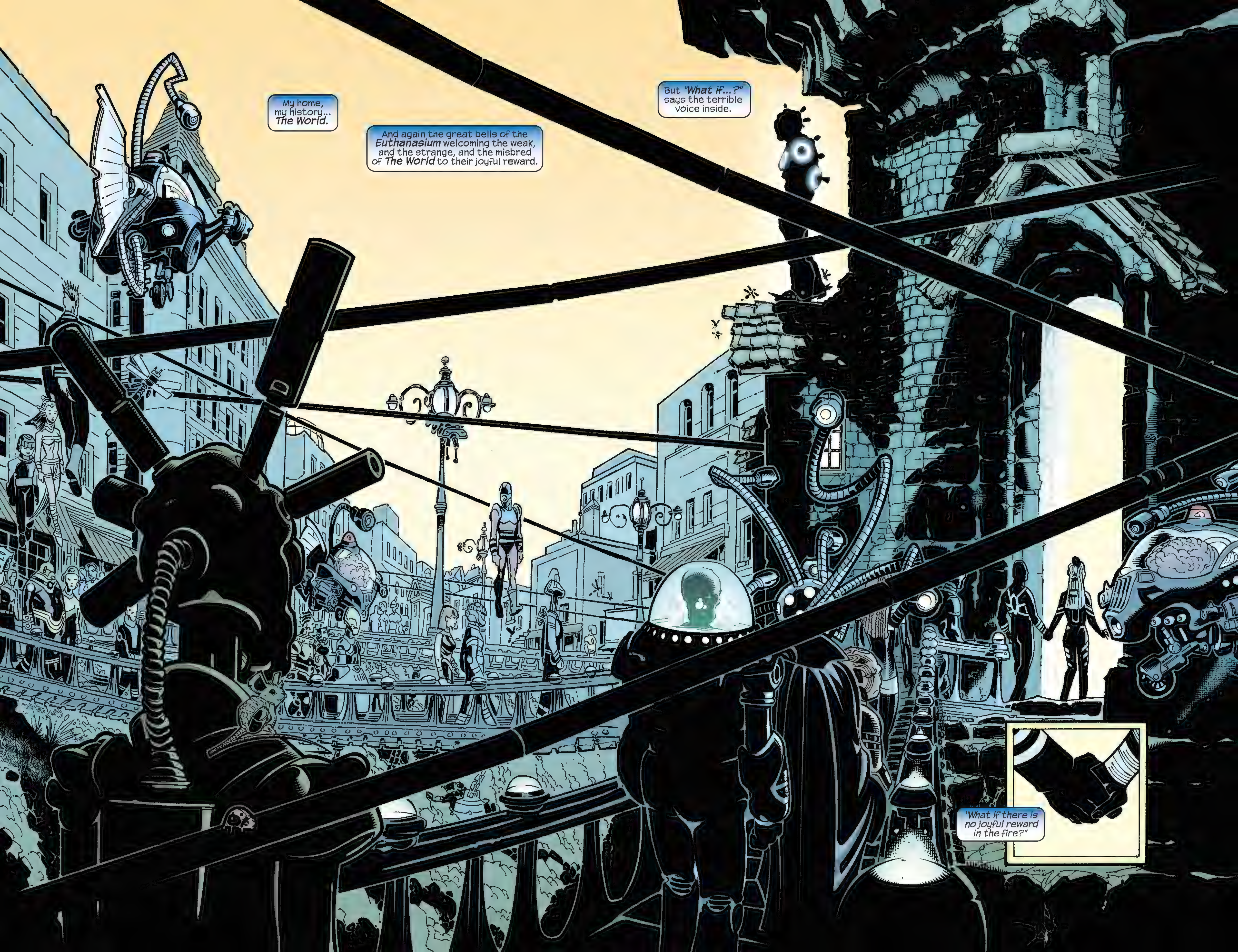
BRIMSTONE & WHISKEY

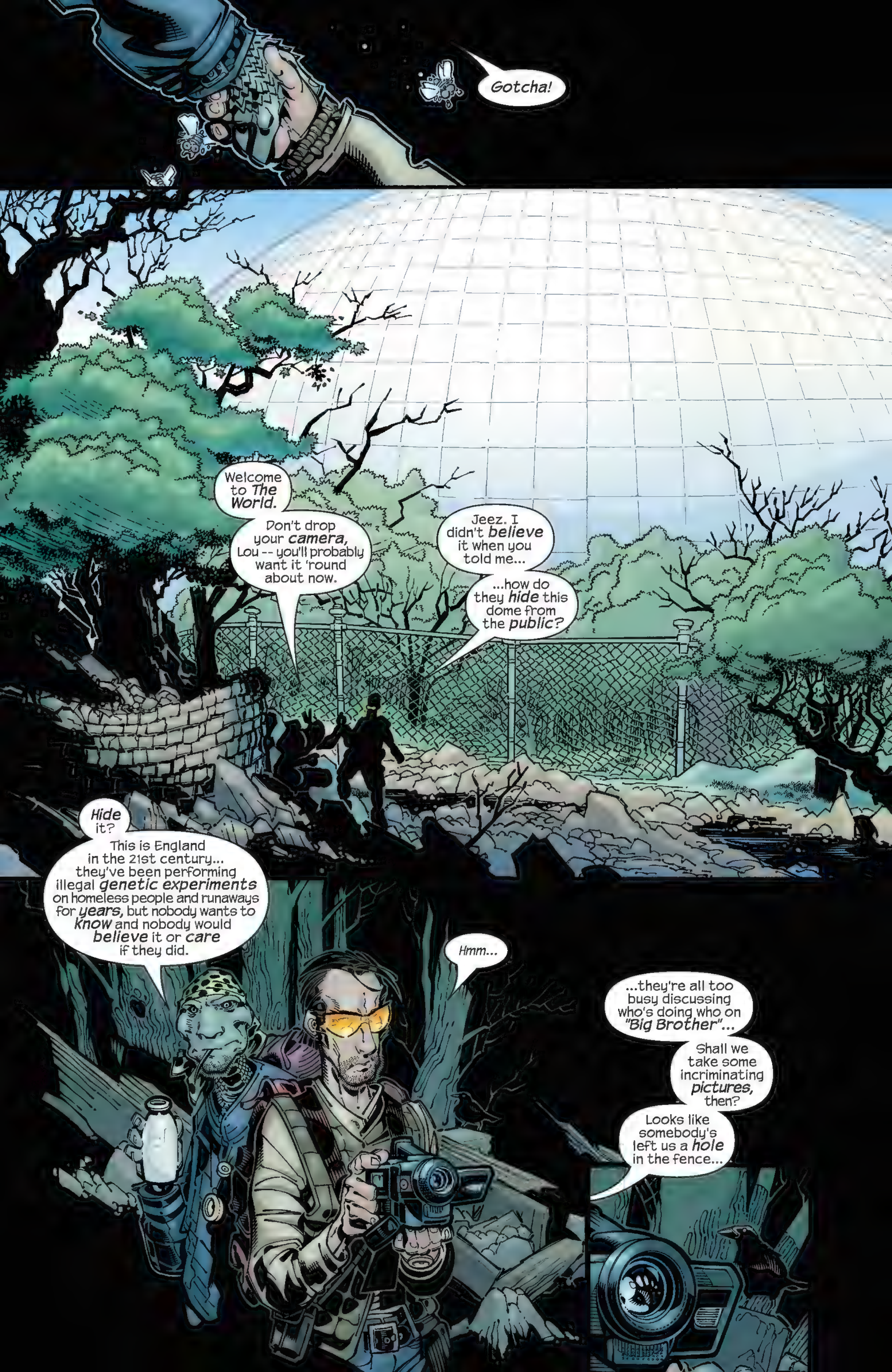


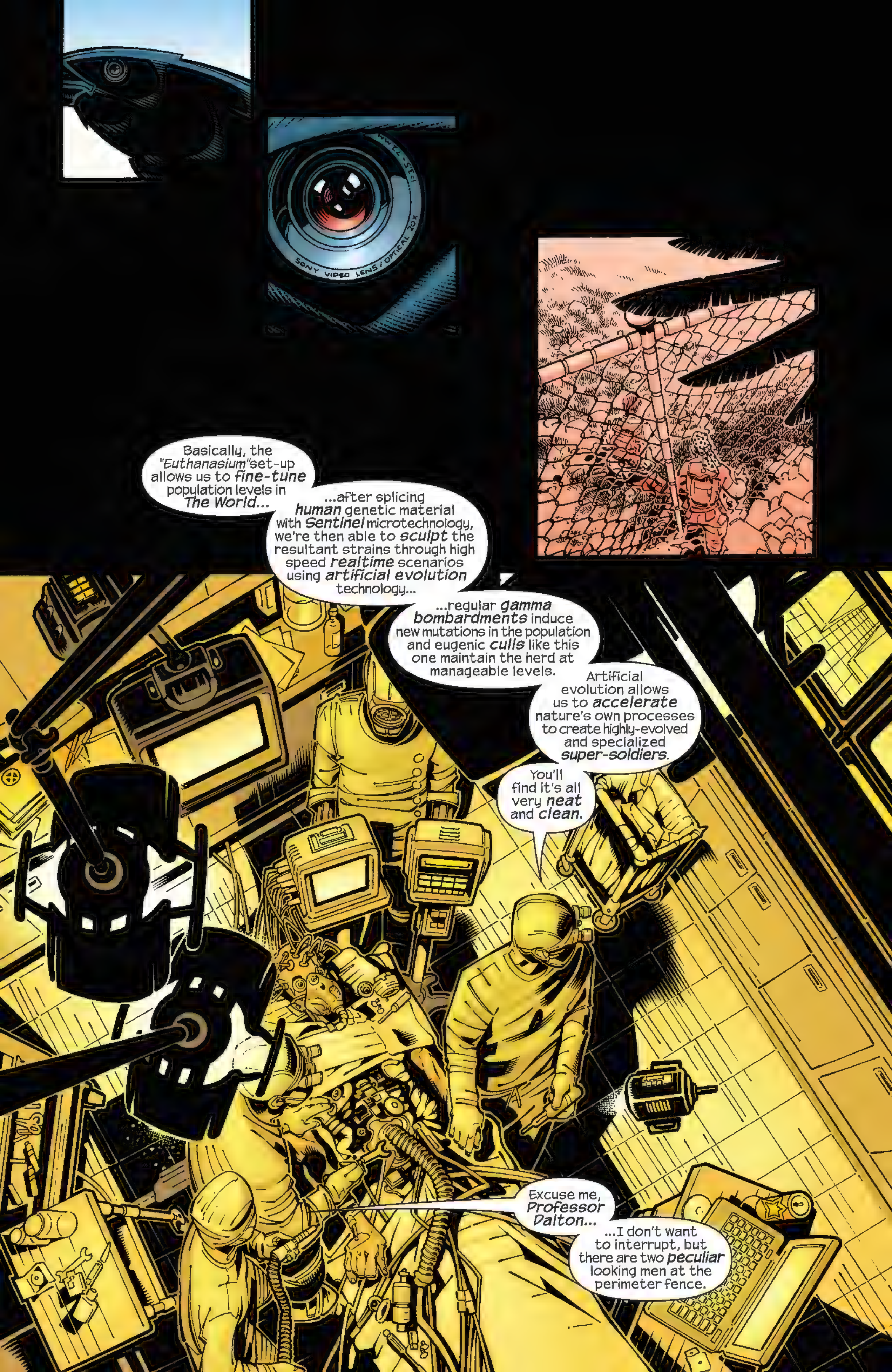
NEW X-MEN #143
“ASSAULT ON WEAPON PLUS PART TWO: THE WORLD”

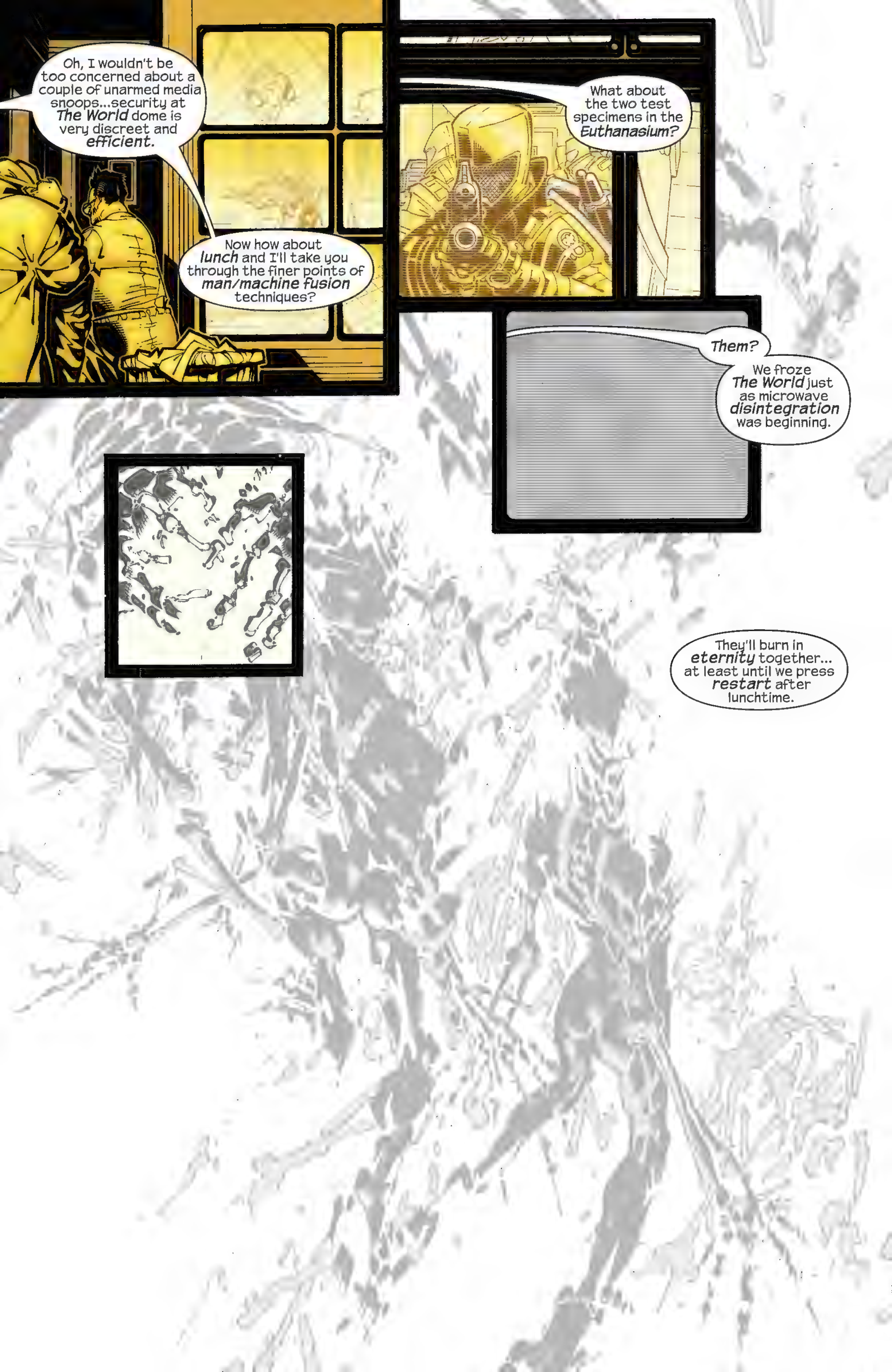
ASSAULT ON WEAPON PLUS PART 2 OF 4 THE WORLD

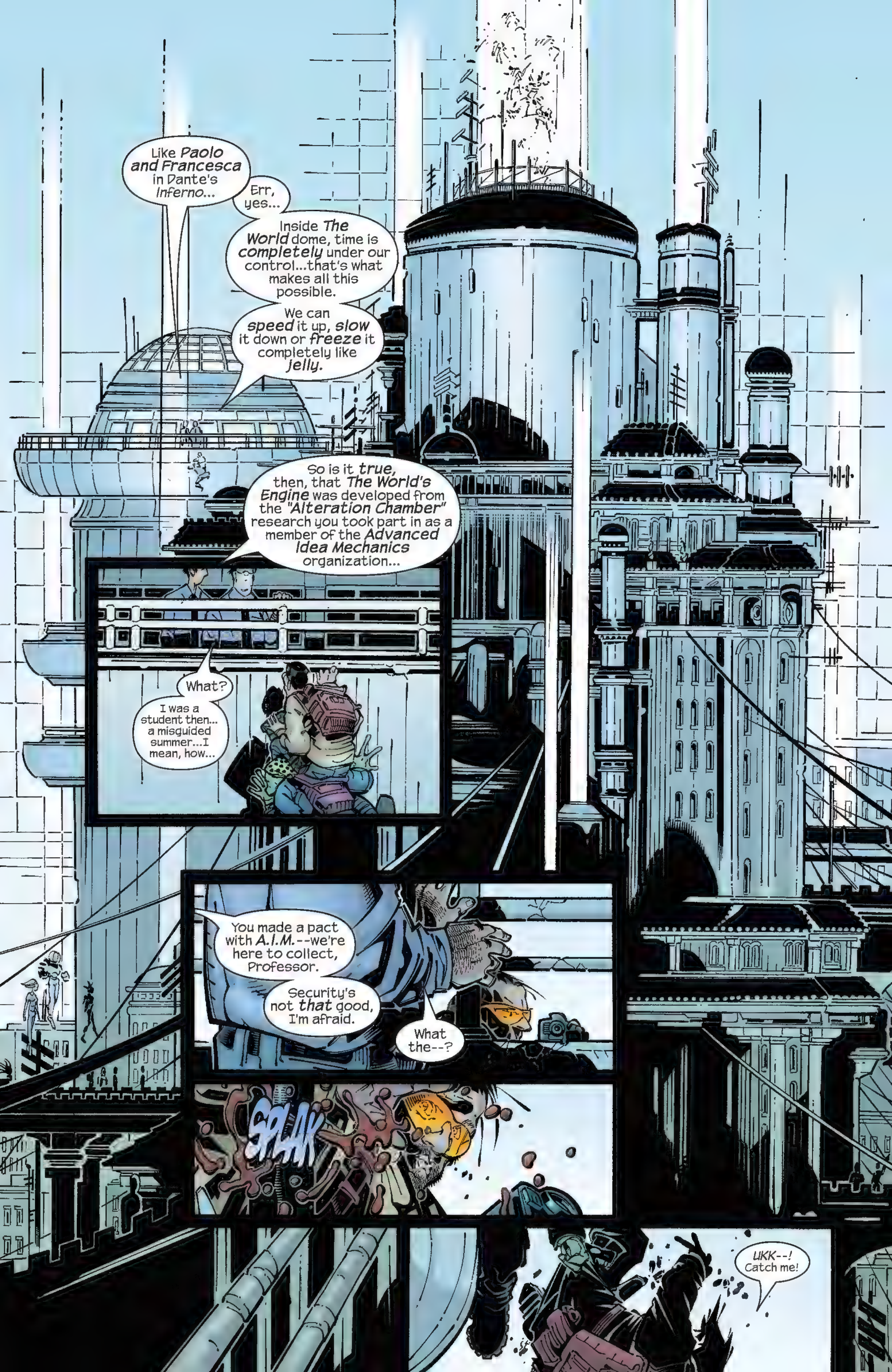

All of this is *mine*...

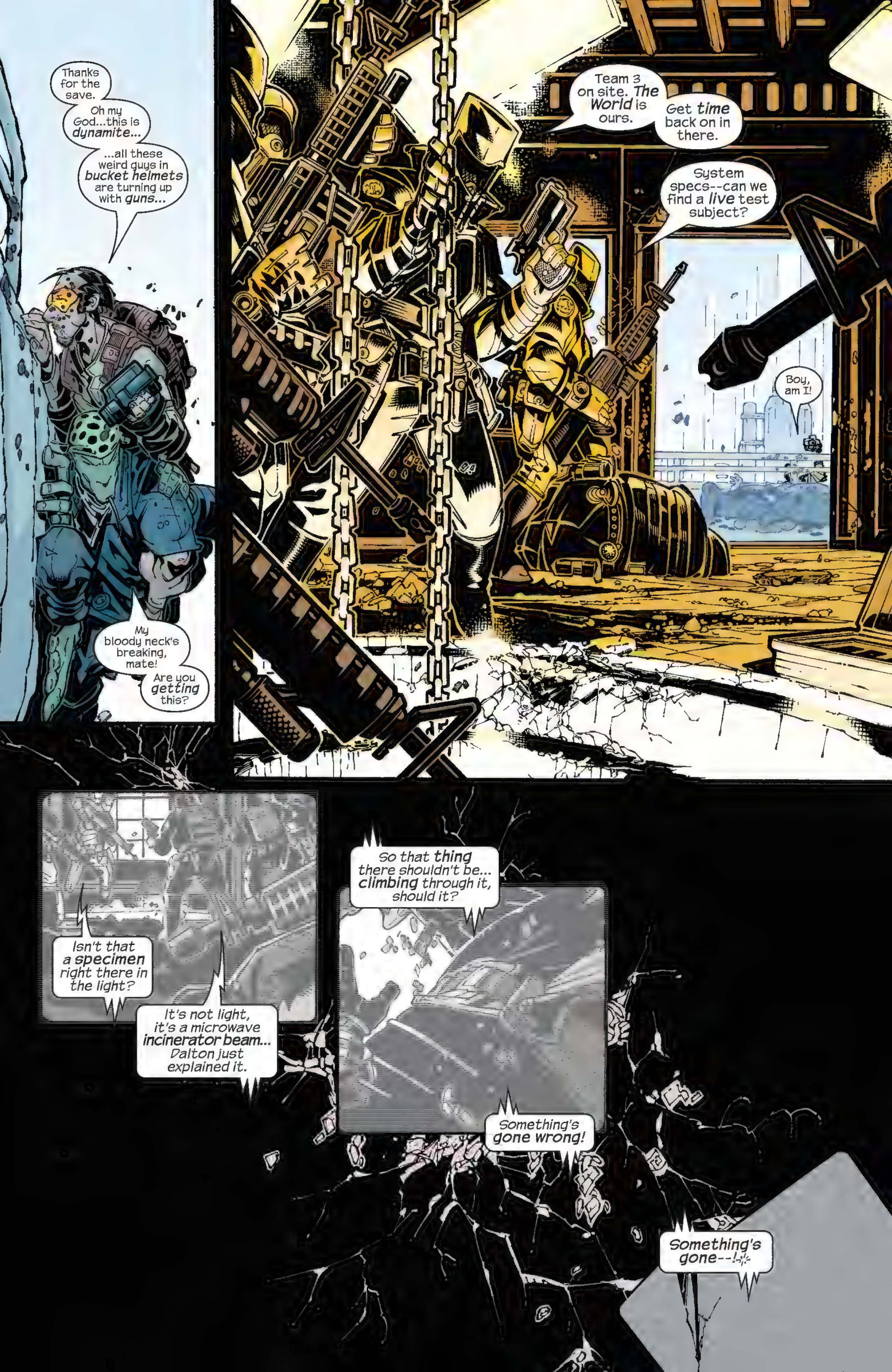

My home, my history... The World.
And again the great bells of the Euthanasium welcoming the weak, and the strange, and the misbred of The World to their joyful reward.
But "What if...?" says the terrible voice inside.
"What if there is no joyful reward in the fire?"

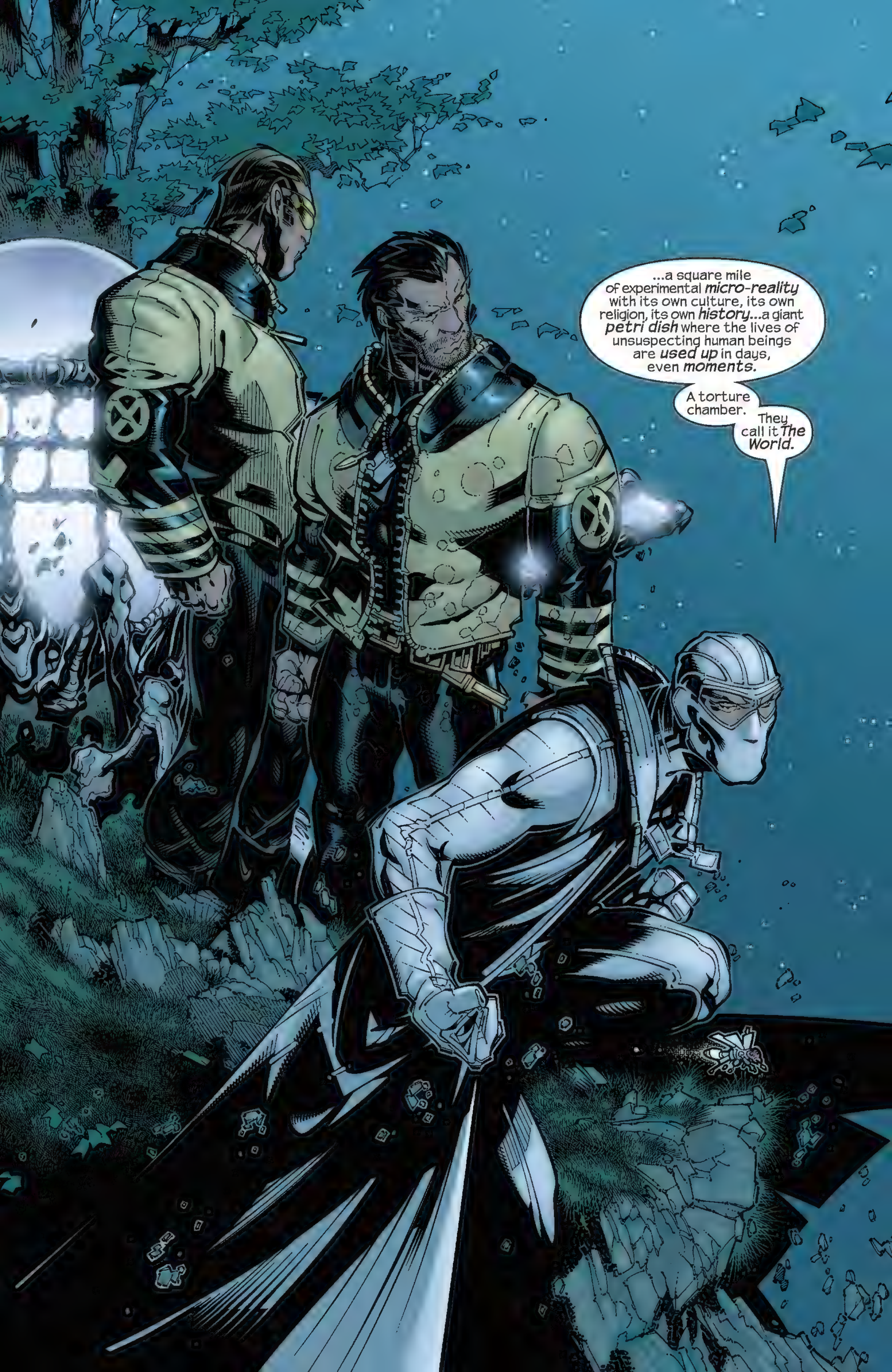

Gotcha!
Welcome to *The World.*
Don't drop your *camera,* Lou -- you'll probably want it 'round about now.
Jeez. I didn't *believe* it when you told me...
...how do they *hide* this dome from the *public?*
Hide it?
This is England in the 21st century... they've been performing illegal *genetic experiments* on homeless people and runaways for *years,* but nobody wants to *know* and nobody would *believe* it or *care* if they did.
Hmm...
...they're all too busy discussing who's doing who on *"Big Brother"...*
Shall we take some incriminating *pictures,* then?
Looks like somebody's left us a *hole* in the fence...

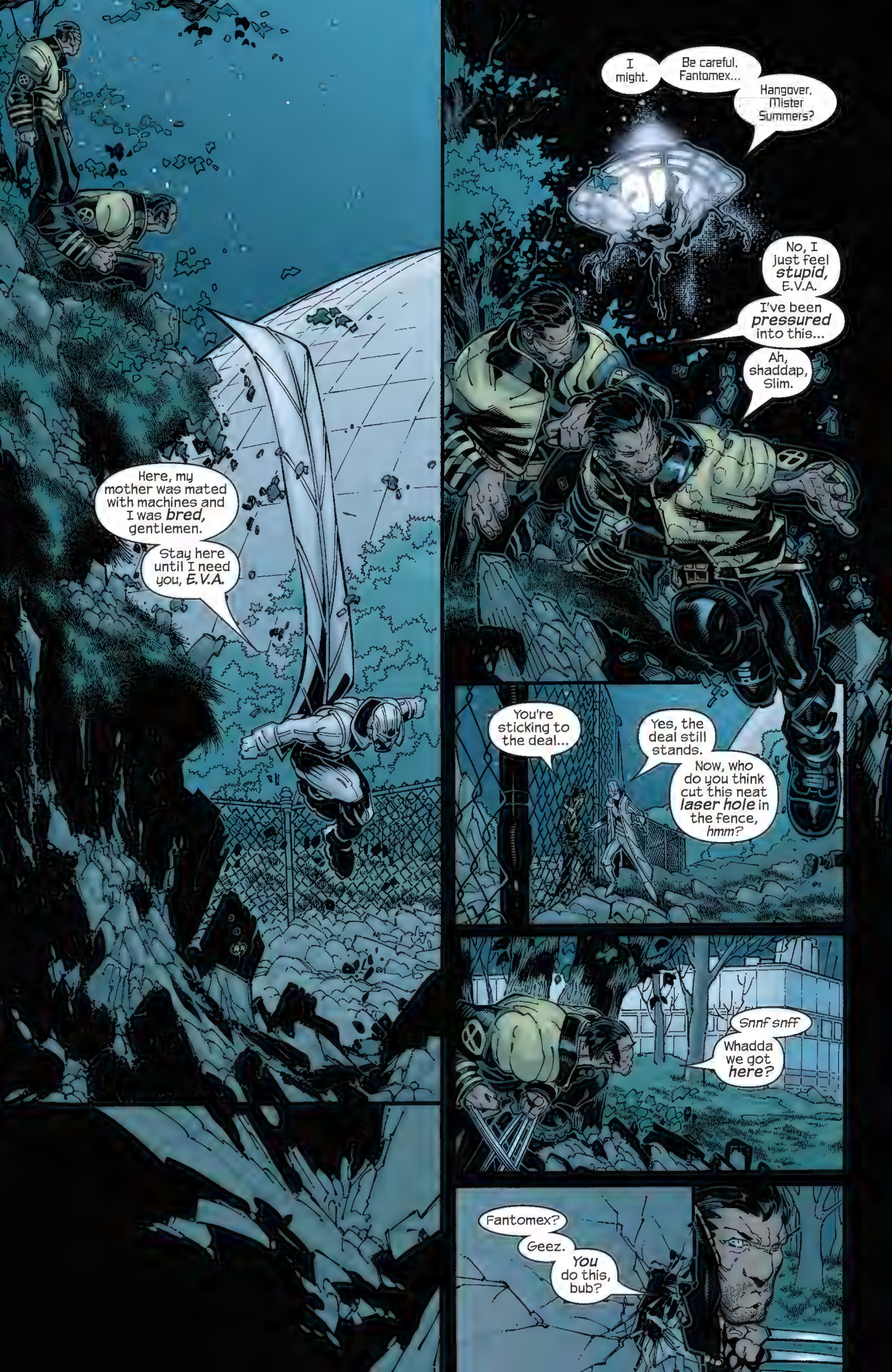

SONY VIDEO LENS / OPTICAL 20X
Basically, the "*Euthanasium*" set-up allows us to ***fine-tune*** population levels in ***The World...***
...after splicing ***human*** genetic material with ***Sentinel*** microtechnology, we're then able to ***sculpt*** the resultant strains through high speed ***realtime*** scenarios using ***artificial evolution*** technology...
...regular ***gamma bombardments*** induce new mutations in the population and eugenic ***culls*** like this one maintain the herd at manageable levels.
Artificial evolution allows us to ***accelerate*** nature's own processes to create highly-evolved and specialized ***super-soldiers.***
You'll find it's all very ***neat*** and ***clean.***
Excuse me, ***Professor Dalton...***
...I don't want to interrupt, but there are two ***peculiar*** looking men at the perimeter fence.

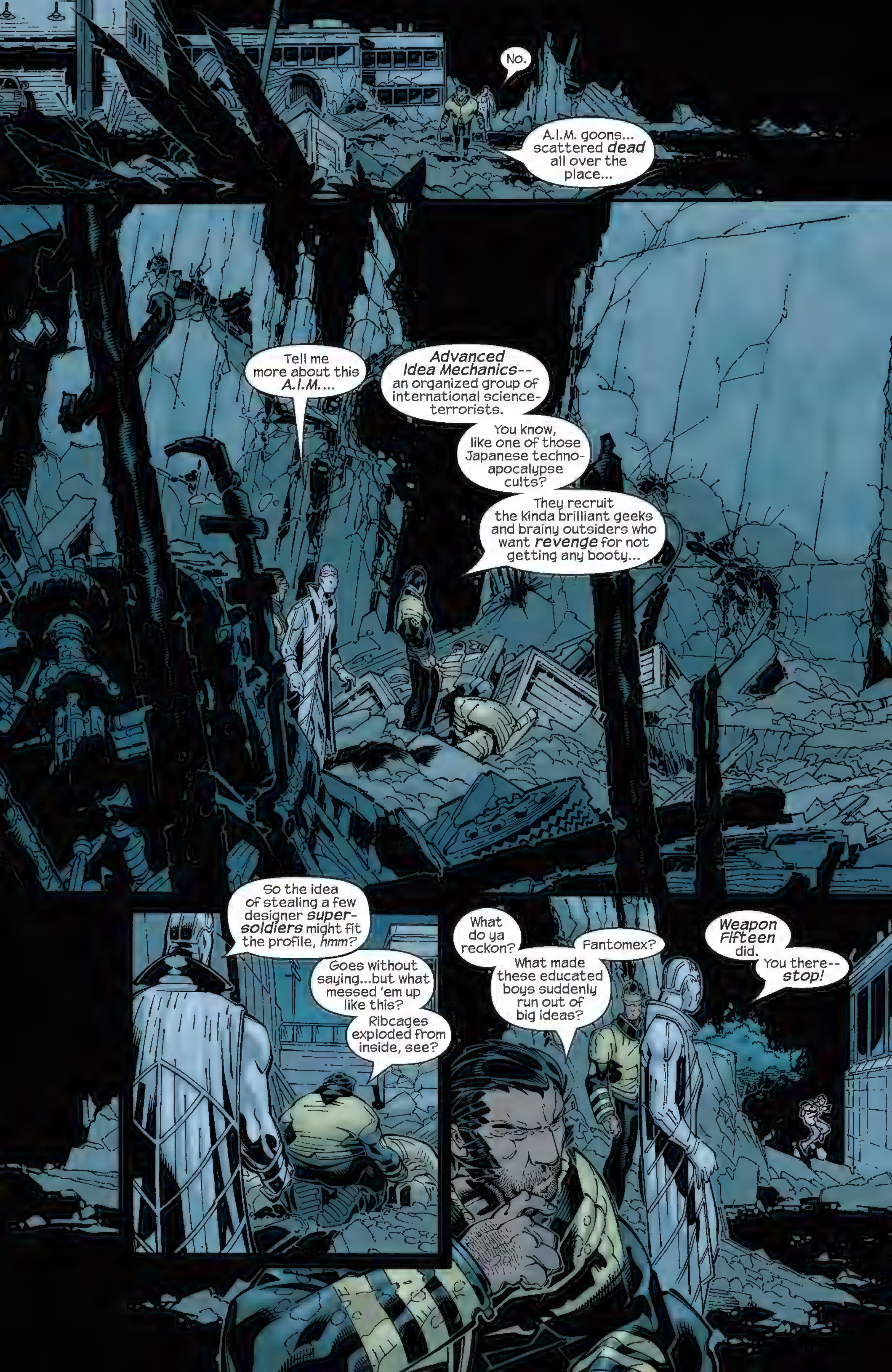

Oh, I wouldn't be too concerned about a couple of unarmed media snoops...security at The World dome is very discreet and efficient.
Now how about lunch and I'll take you through the finer points of man/machine fusion techniques?
What about the two test specimens in the Euthanasium?
Them?
We froze The World just as microwave disintegration was beginning.
They'll burn in eternity together... at least until we press restart after lunchtime.

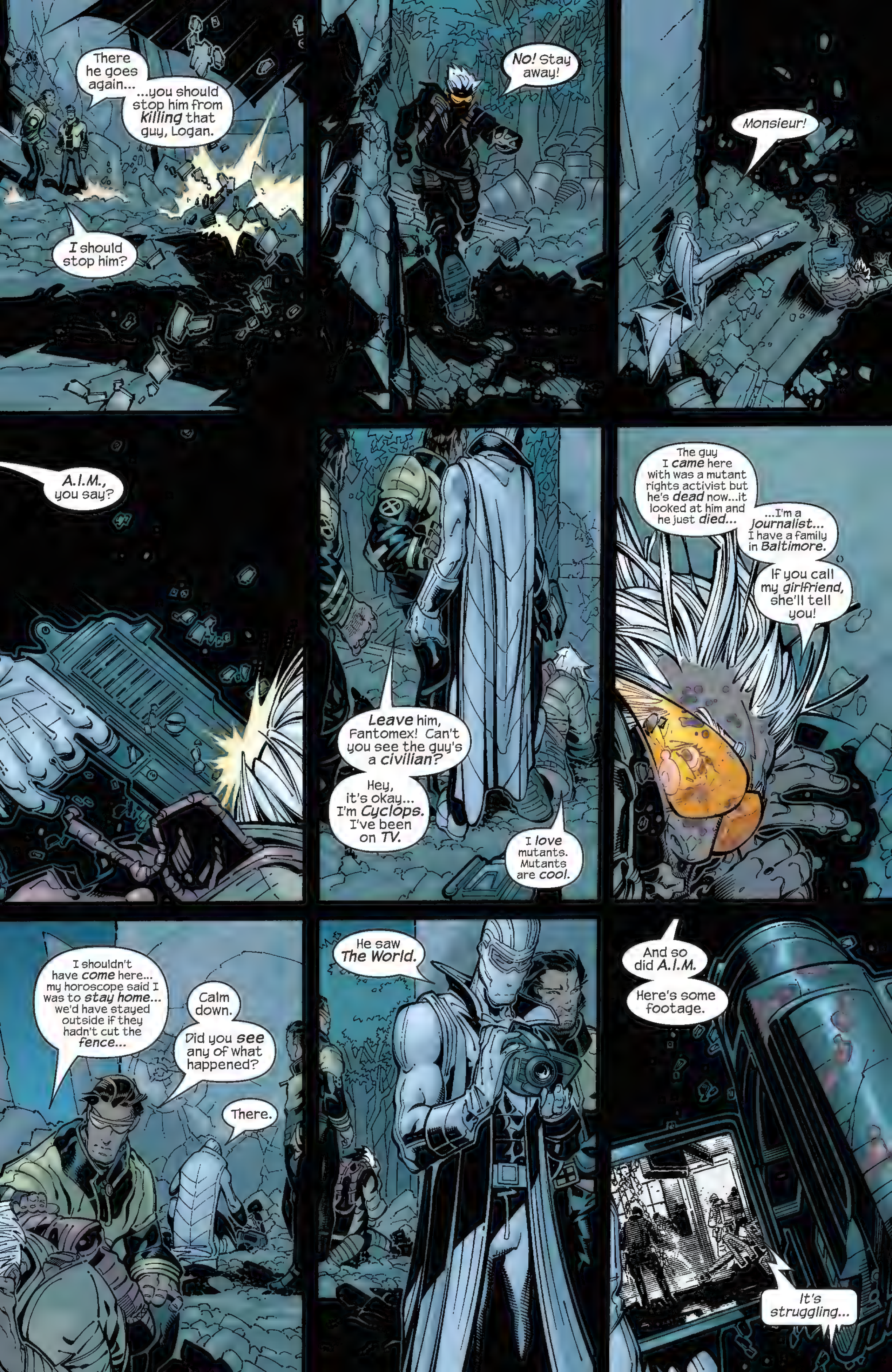

Like *Paolo and Francesca* in Dante's *Inferno...*
Err, yes...
Inside *The World* dome, time is *completely* under our control...that's what makes all this possible.
We can *speed* it up, *slow* it down or *freeze* it completely like *jelly.*
So is it *true,* then, that *The World's Engine* was developed from the *"Alteration Chamber"* research you took part in as a member of the *Advanced Idea Mechanics* organization...
What?
I was a student then... a misguided summer...I mean, how...
You made a pact with *A.I.M.*--we're here to collect, Professor.
Security's not *that* good, I'm afraid.
What the--?
SPLAK
UKK--! Catch me!

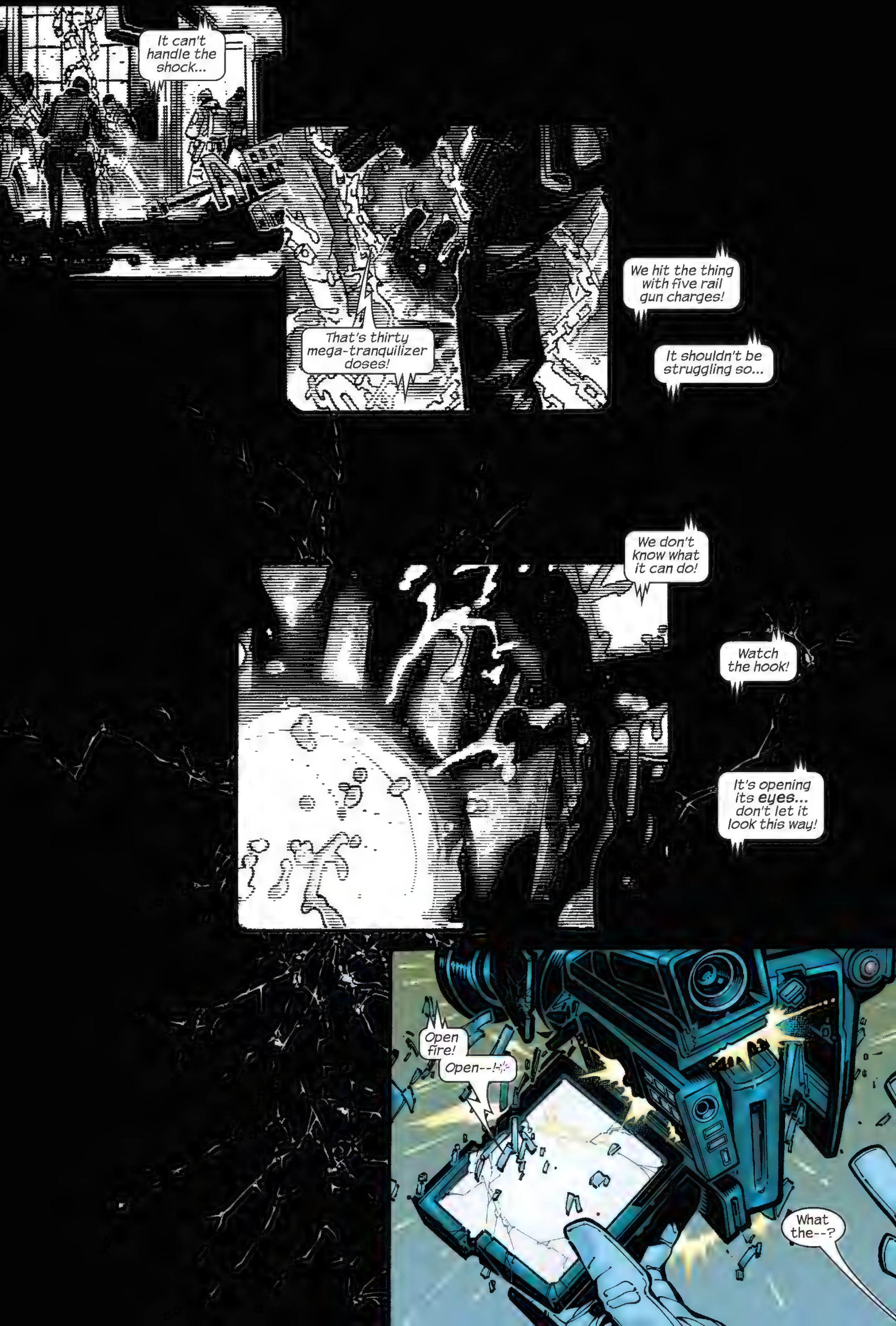

Thanks for the save.
Oh my God...this is *dynamite*...
...all these weird guys in ***bucket helmets*** are turning up with *guns*...
My bloody neck's breaking, mate!
Are you *getting* this?
Team 3 on site. *The World* is ours.
Get *time* back on in there.
System specs--can we find a *live* test subject?
Boy, am I!
Isn't that a ***specimen*** right there in the light?
It's not light, it's a microwave ***incinerator beam...*** Dalton just explained it.
So that ***thing*** there shouldn't be... ***climbing*** through it, should it?
Something's ***gone wrong!***
Something's gone--!

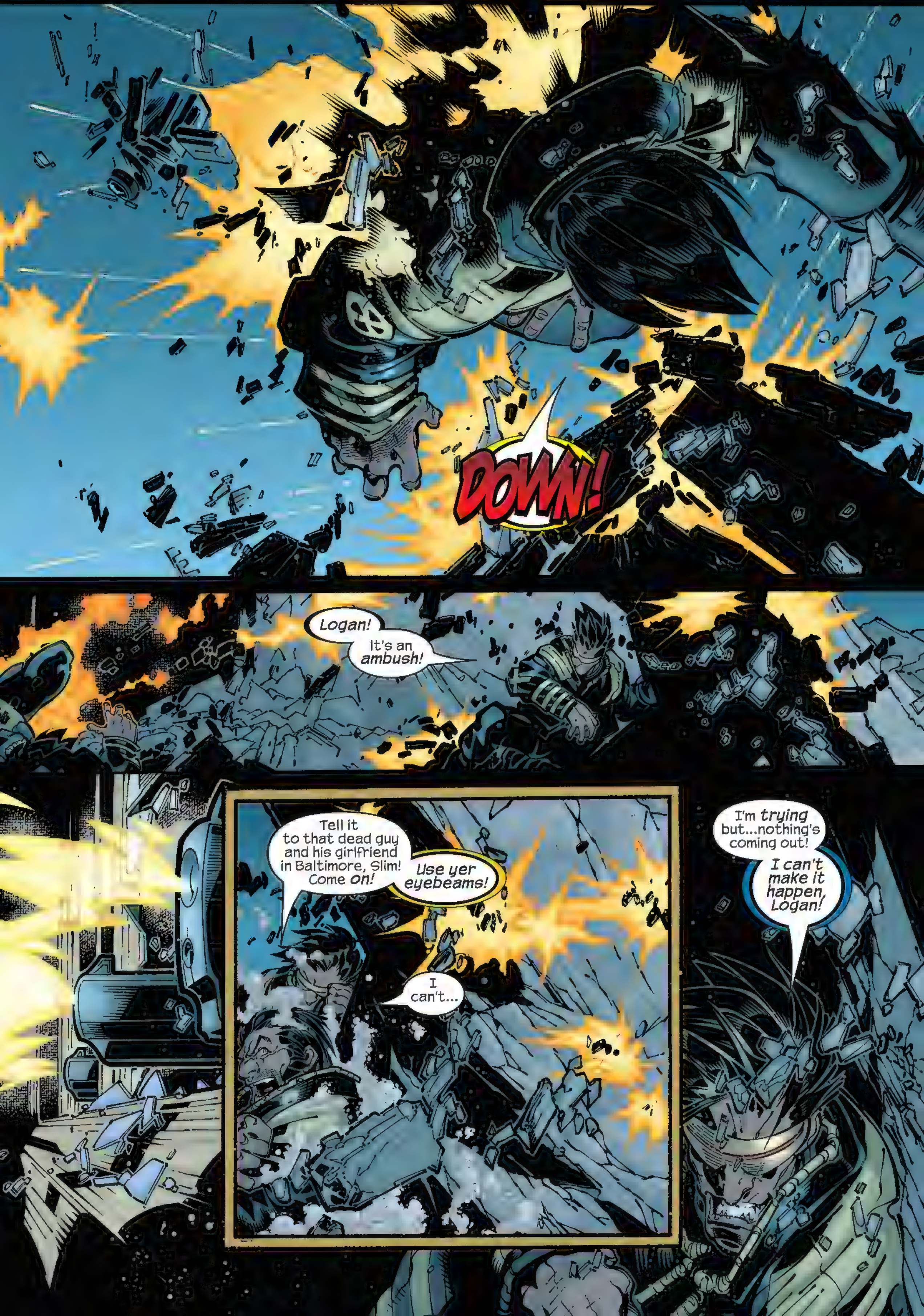

...a square mile of experimental *micro-reality* with its own culture, its own religion, its own *history*...a giant *petri dish* where the lives of unsuspecting human beings are *used up* in days, even *moments.*
A torture chamber.
They call it *The World.*

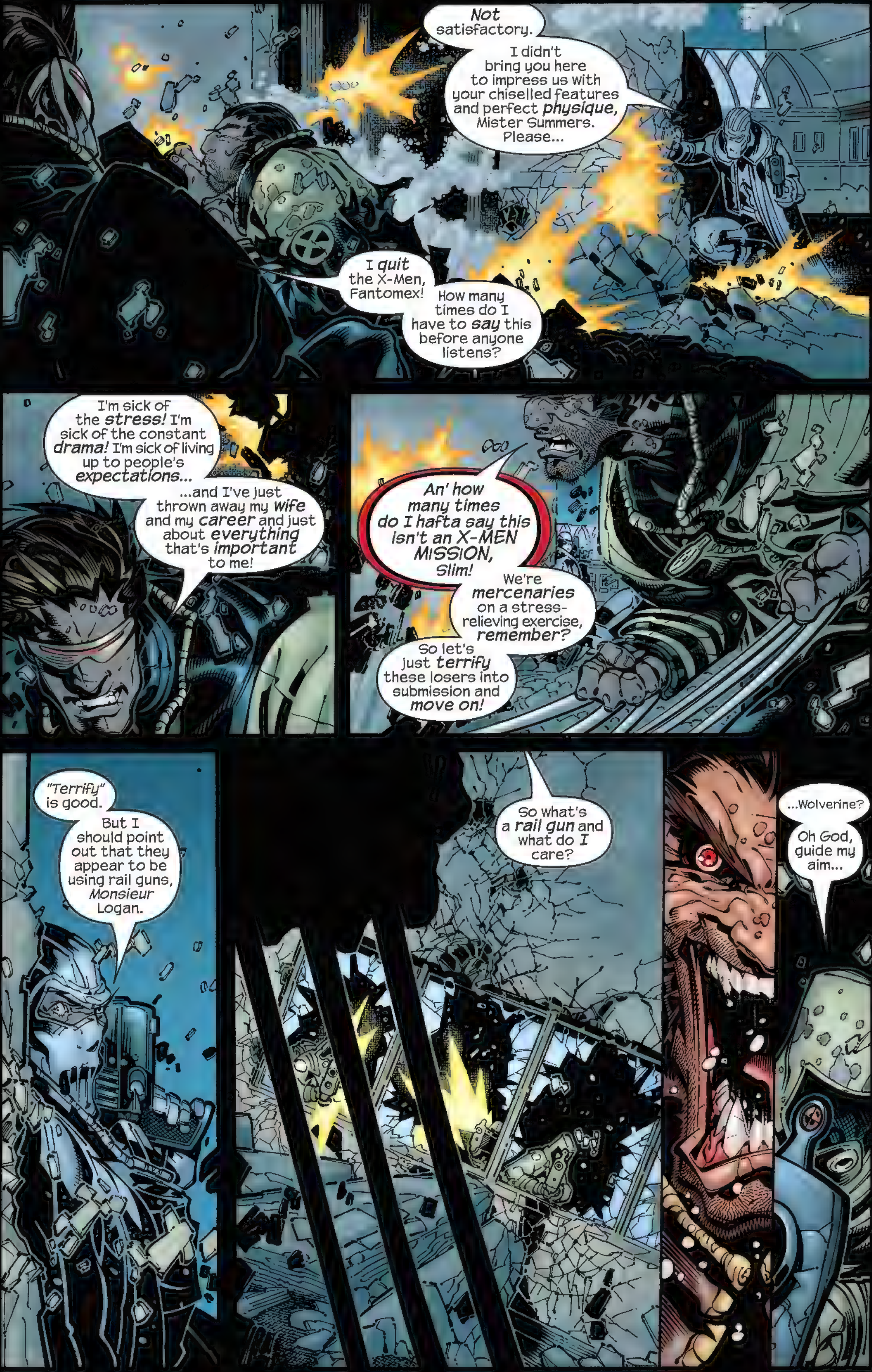

Here, my mother was mated with machines and I was *bred,* gentlemen.
Stay here until I need you, *E.V.A.*
I might.
Be careful, Fantomex...
Hangover, Mister Summers?
No, I just feel ***stupid,*** E.V.A.
I've been ***pressured*** into this...
Ah, shaddap, Slim.
You're sticking to the deal...
Yes, the deal still stands.
Now, who do you think cut this neat ***laser hole*** in the fence, *hmm?*
Snnf snff
Whadda we got ***here?***
Fantomex?
Geez.
You do this, bub?

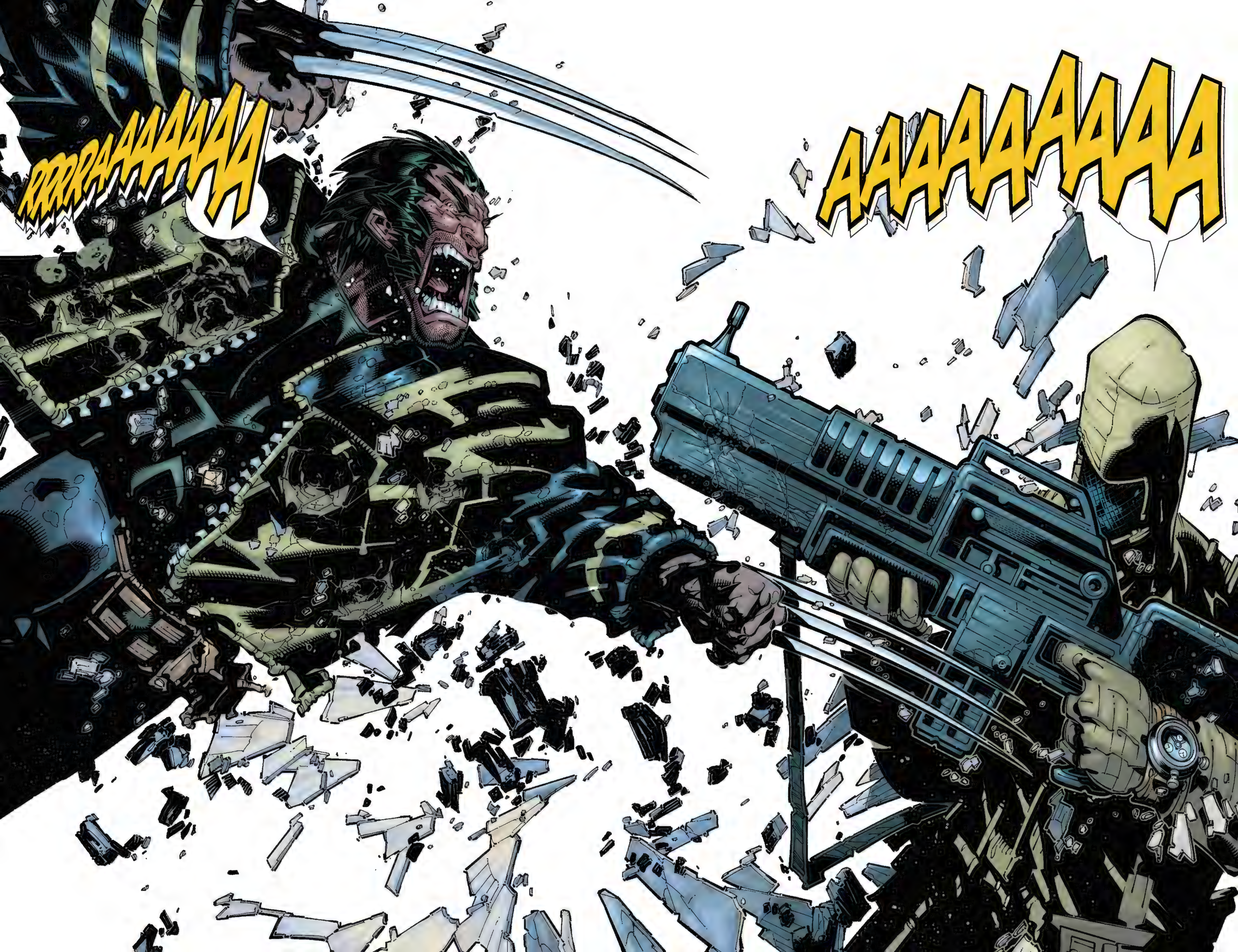

No.
A.I.M. goons... scattered *dead* all over the place...
Tell me more about this *A.I.M.*...
Advanced Idea Mechanics-- an organized group of international science-terrorists.
You know, like one of those Japanese techno-apocalypse cults?
They recruit the kinda brilliant geeks and brainy outsiders who want *revenge* for not getting any booty...
So the idea of stealing a few designer *super-soldiers* might fit the profile, *hmm?*
Goes without saying...but what messed 'em up like this?
Ribcages exploded from inside, see?
What do ya reckon?
Fantomex?
What made these educated boys suddenly run out of big ideas?
Weapon Fifteen did.
You there-- *stop!*

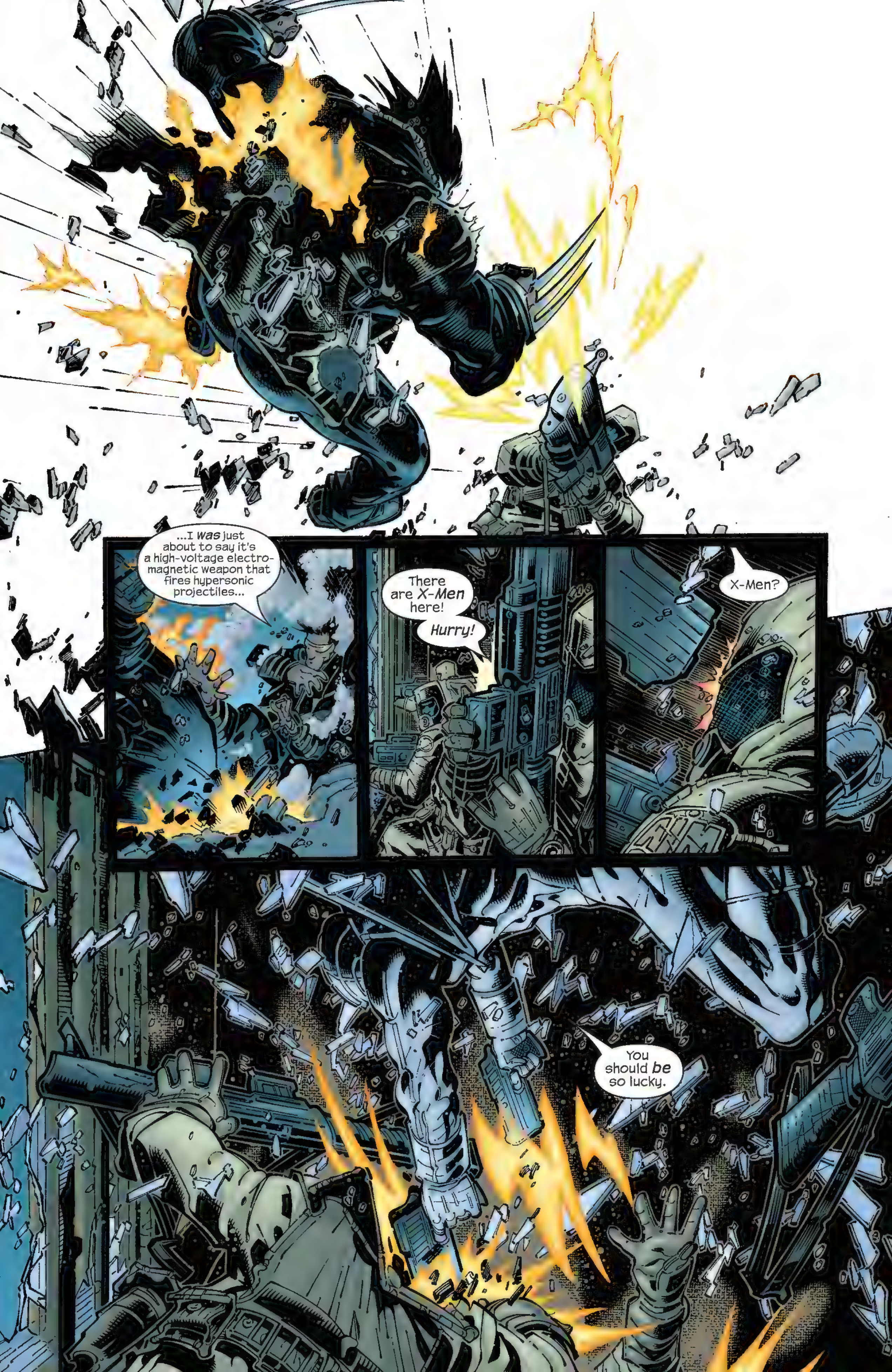

There he goes again...
...you should stop him from *killing* that guy, Logan.
I should stop him?
No! Stay away!
Monsieur!
A.I.M., you say?
Leave him, Fantomex! Can't you see the guy's a *civilian?*
Hey, it's okay... I'm *Cyclops.* I've been on *TV.*
I *love* mutants. Mutants are *cool.*
The guy I *came* here with was a mutant rights activist but he's *dead* now...it looked at him and he just *died...*
...I'm a *journalist...* I have a family in *Baltimore.*
If you call my *girlfriend,* she'll tell you!
I shouldn't have *come* here... my horoscope said I was to *stay home...* we'd have stayed outside if they hadn't cut the *fence...*
Calm down.
Did you *see* any of what happened?
There.
He saw *The World.*
And so did *A.I.M.*
Here's some footage.
It's struggling...

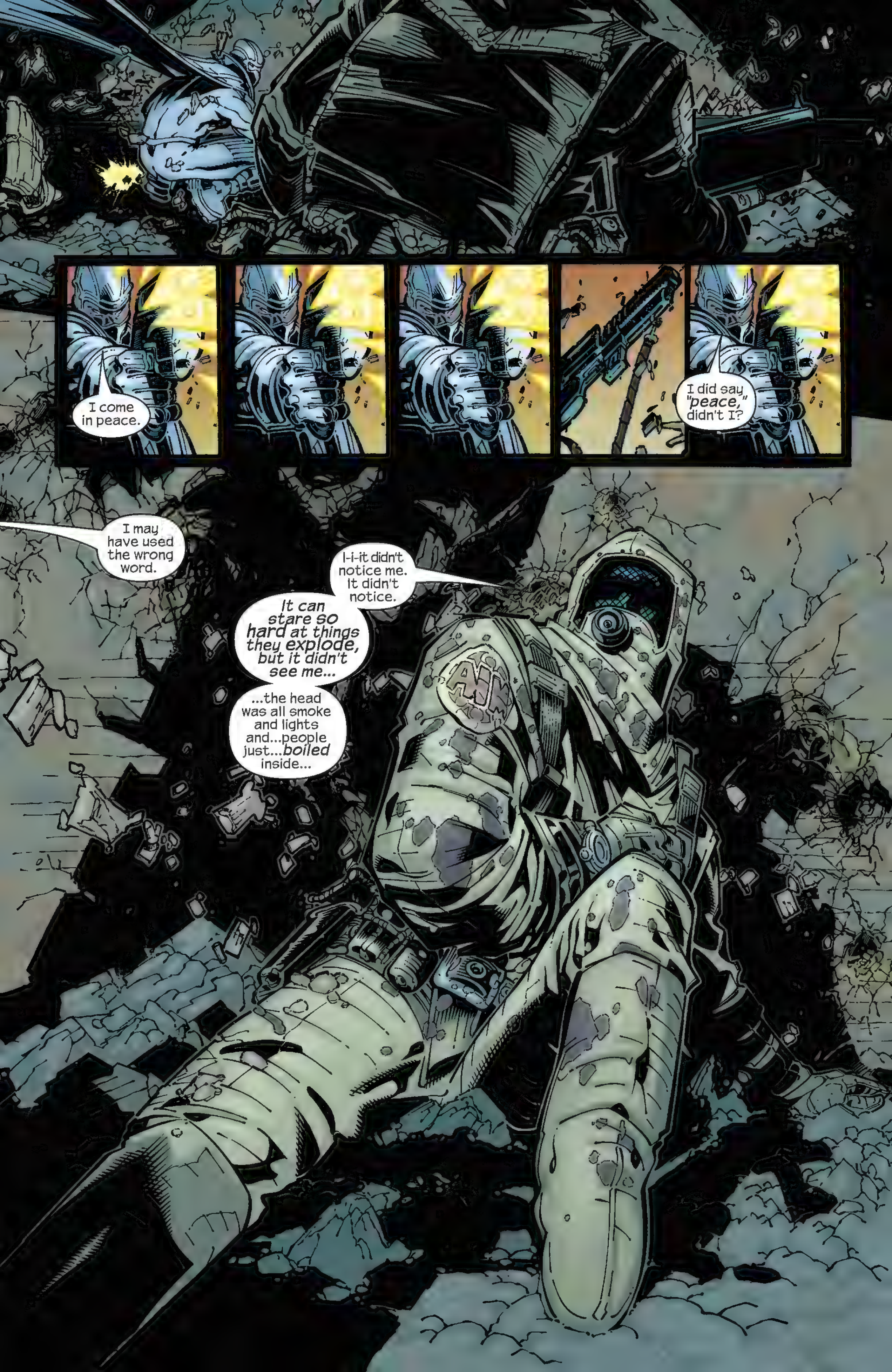

It can't handle the shock...
That's thirty mega-tranquilizer doses!
We hit the thing with five rail gun charges!
It shouldn't be struggling so...
We don't know what it can do!
Watch the hook!
It's opening its **eyes...** don't let it look this way!
Open fire!
Open--!!
What the--?

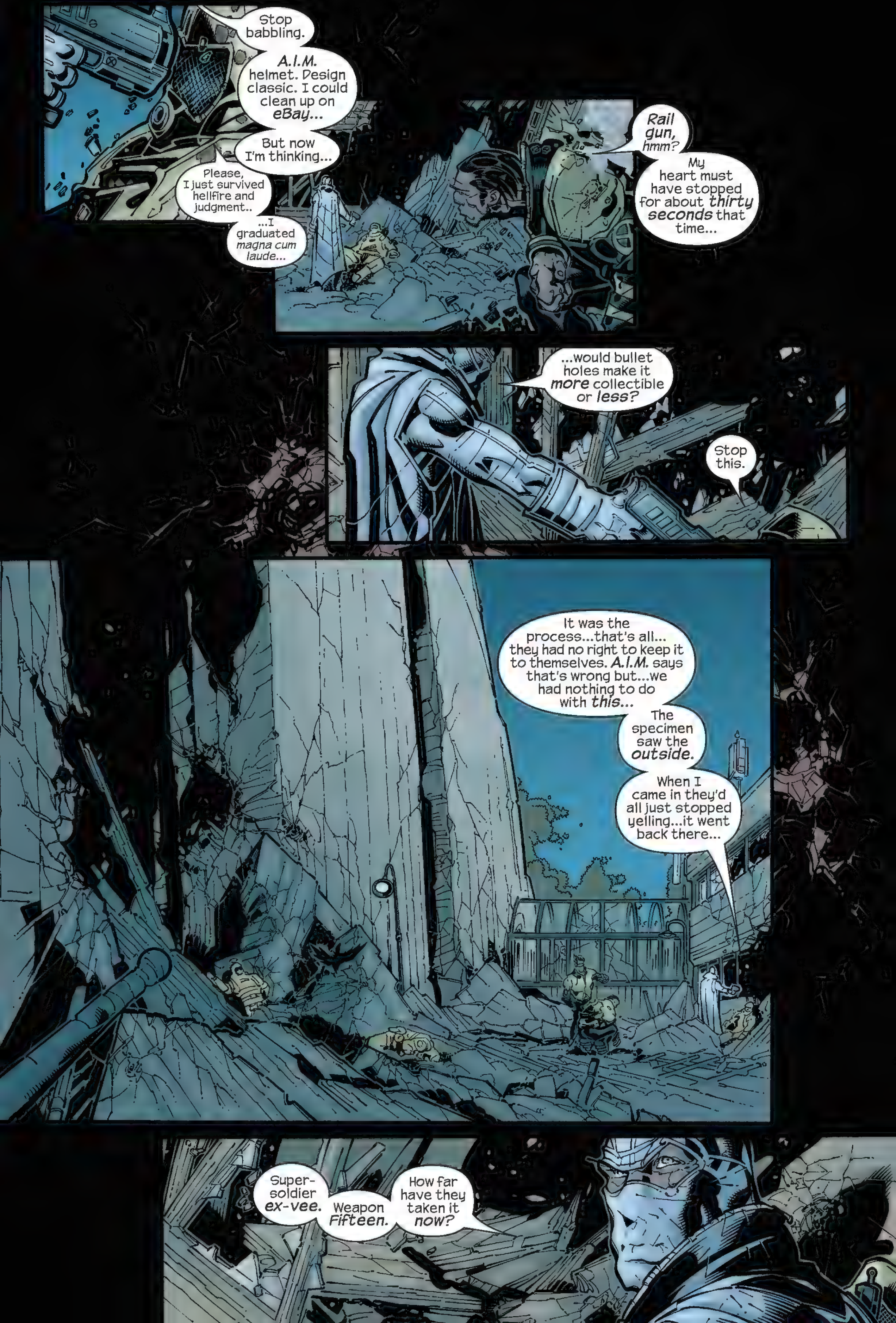

DOWN!
Logan! It's an *ambush!*
Tell it to that dead guy and his girlfriend in Baltimore, Slim! Come *on!*
Use yer eyebeams!
I can't...
I'm *trying* but...nothing's coming out!
I can't make it happen, Logan!

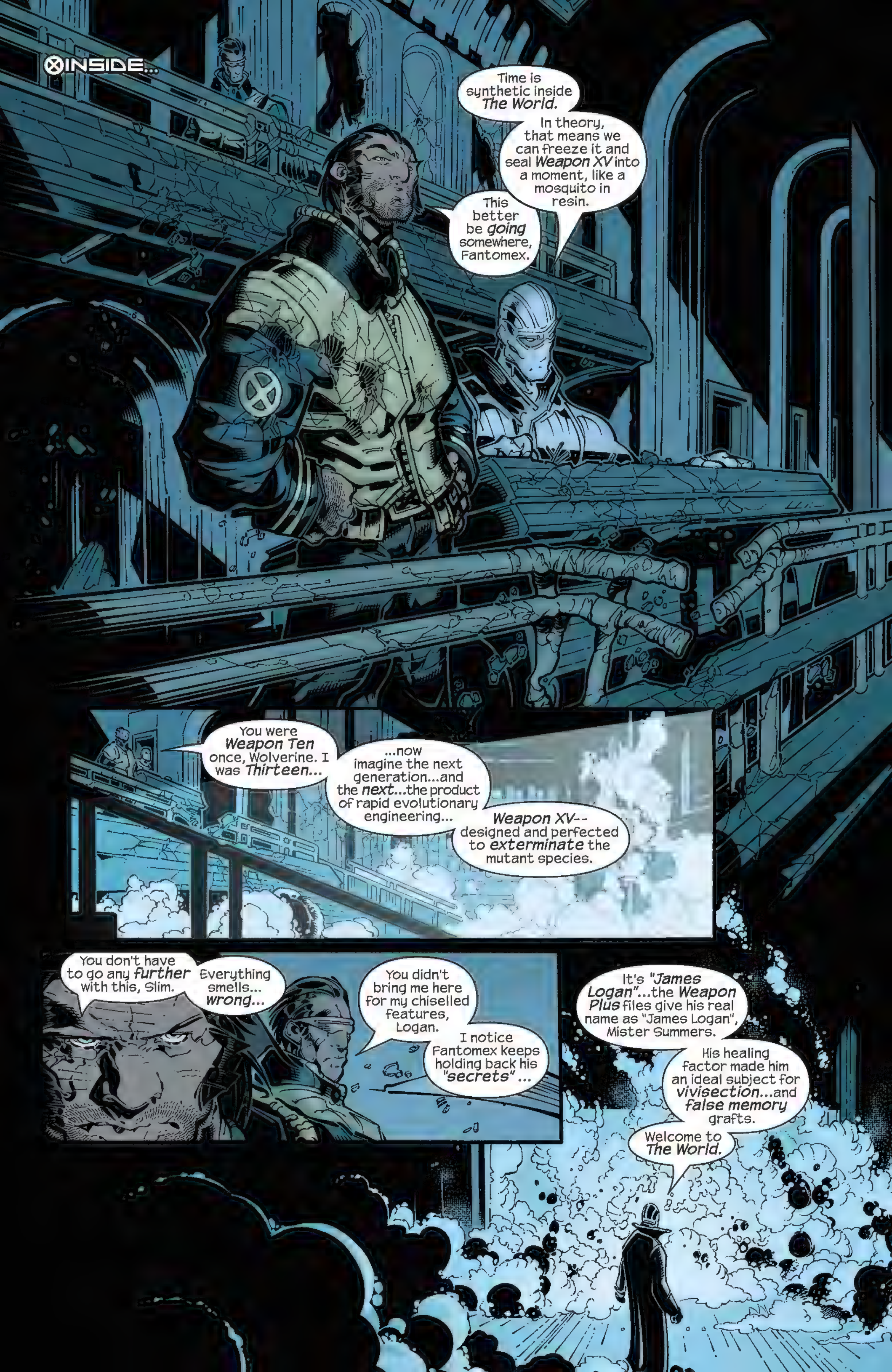

Not satisfactory.
I didn't bring you here to impress us with your chiselled features and perfect *physique,* Mister Summers. Please...
I *quit* the X-Men, Fantomex!
How many times do I have to *say* this before anyone listens?
I'm sick of the *stress!* I'm sick of the constant *drama!* I'm sick of living up to people's *expectations...*
...and I've just thrown away my *wife* and my *career* and just about *everything* that's *important* to me!
An' how many times do I hafta say this isn't an X-MEN MISSION, Slim!
We're *mercenaries* on a stress-relieving exercise, *remember?*
So let's just *terrify* these losers into submission and *move on!*
"Terrify" is good.
But I should point out that they appear to be using rail guns, *Monsieur* Logan.
So what's a *rail gun* and what do *I* care?
...Wolverine?
Oh God, guide my aim...

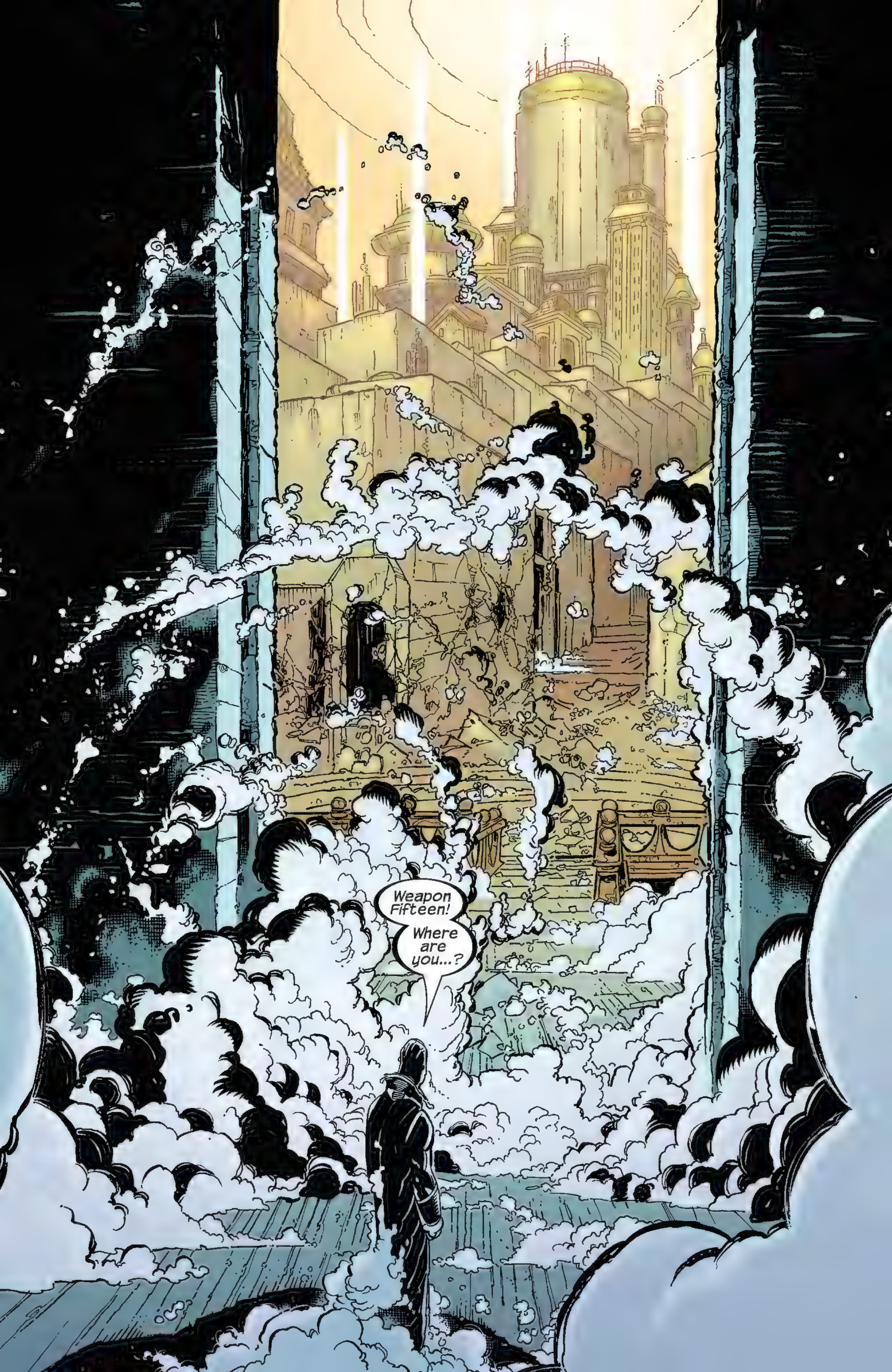

RRRRAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAA

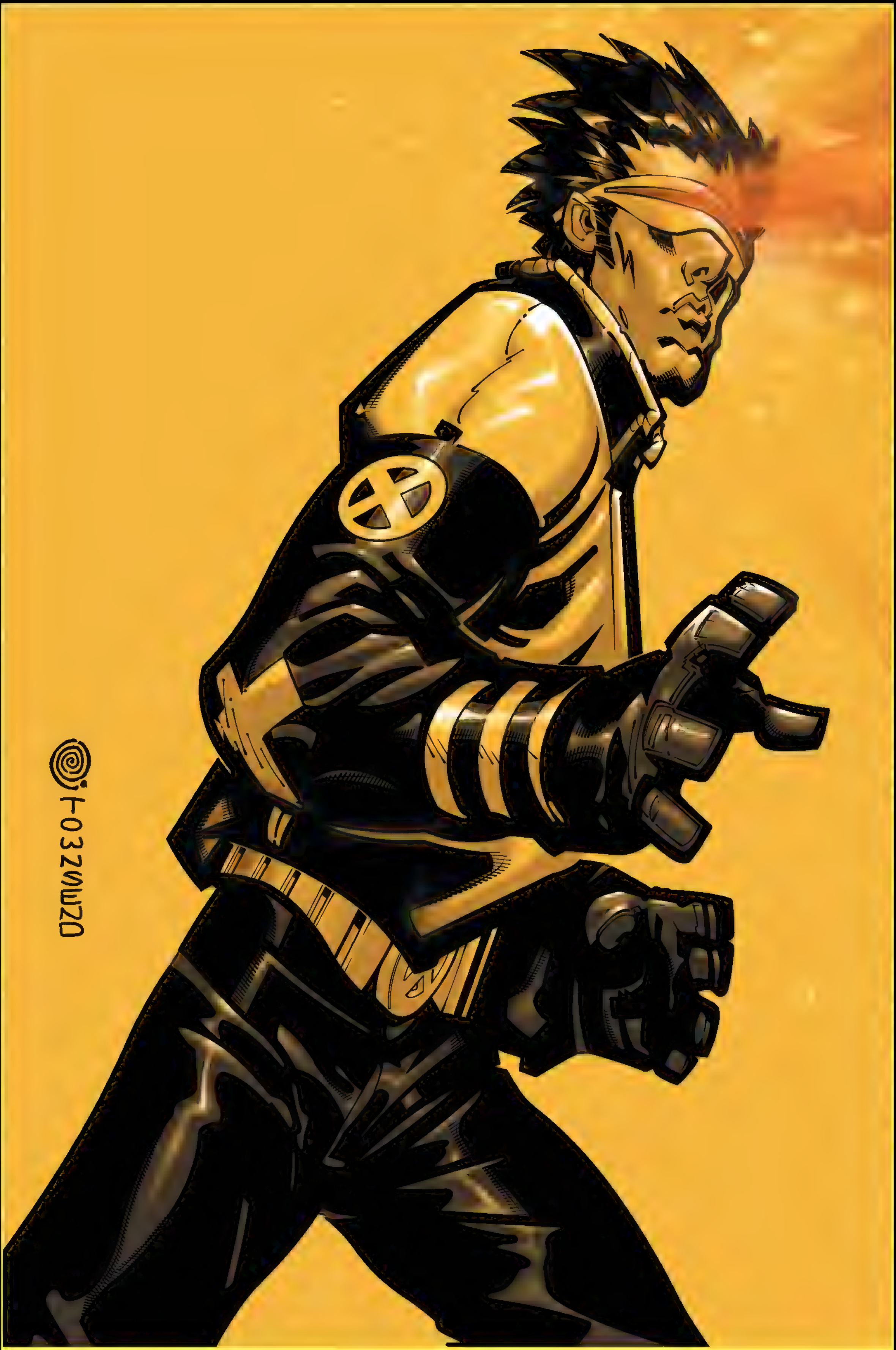

...I *was* just about to say it's a high-voltage electro-magnetic weapon that fires hypersonic projectiles...
There are *X-Men* here!
Hurry!
X-Men?
You should *be* so lucky.


I come in peace.
I did say "*peace,*" didn't I?
I may have used the wrong word.
I-i-it didn't notice me. It didn't notice.
It can stare so hard at things they explode, but it didn't see me...
...the head was all smoke and lights and...people just...*boiled* inside...


Stop babbling.
A.I.M. helmet. Design classic. I could clean up on eBay...
But now I'm thinking...
Please, I just survived hellfire and judgment..
...I graduated magna cum laude...
Rail gun, hmm?
My heart must have stopped for about thirty seconds that time...
...would bullet holes make it more collectible or less?
Stop this.
It was the process...that's all... they had no right to keep it to themselves. A.I.M. says that's wrong but...we had nothing to do with this...
The specimen saw the outside.
When I came in they'd all just stopped yelling...it went back there...
Super-soldier ex-vee.
Weapon Fifteen.
How far have they taken it now?


INSIDE...
Time is synthetic inside *The World.*
In theory, that means we can freeze it and seal *Weapon XV* into a moment, like a mosquito in resin.
This better be *going* somewhere, Fantomex.
You were *Weapon Ten* once, Wolverine. I was *Thirteen...*
...now imagine the next generation...and the *next*...the product of rapid evolutionary engineering...
Weapon XV--designed and perfected to *exterminate* the mutant species.
You don't have to go any *further* with this, Slim.
Everything smells... *wrong...*
You didn't bring me here for my chiselled features, Logan.
I notice Fantomex keeps holding back his *"secrets"*...
It's *"James Logan"*...the *Weapon Plus* files give his real name as "James Logan", Mister Summers.
His healing factor made him an ideal subject for *vivisection...*and *false memory* grafts.
Welcome to *The World.*

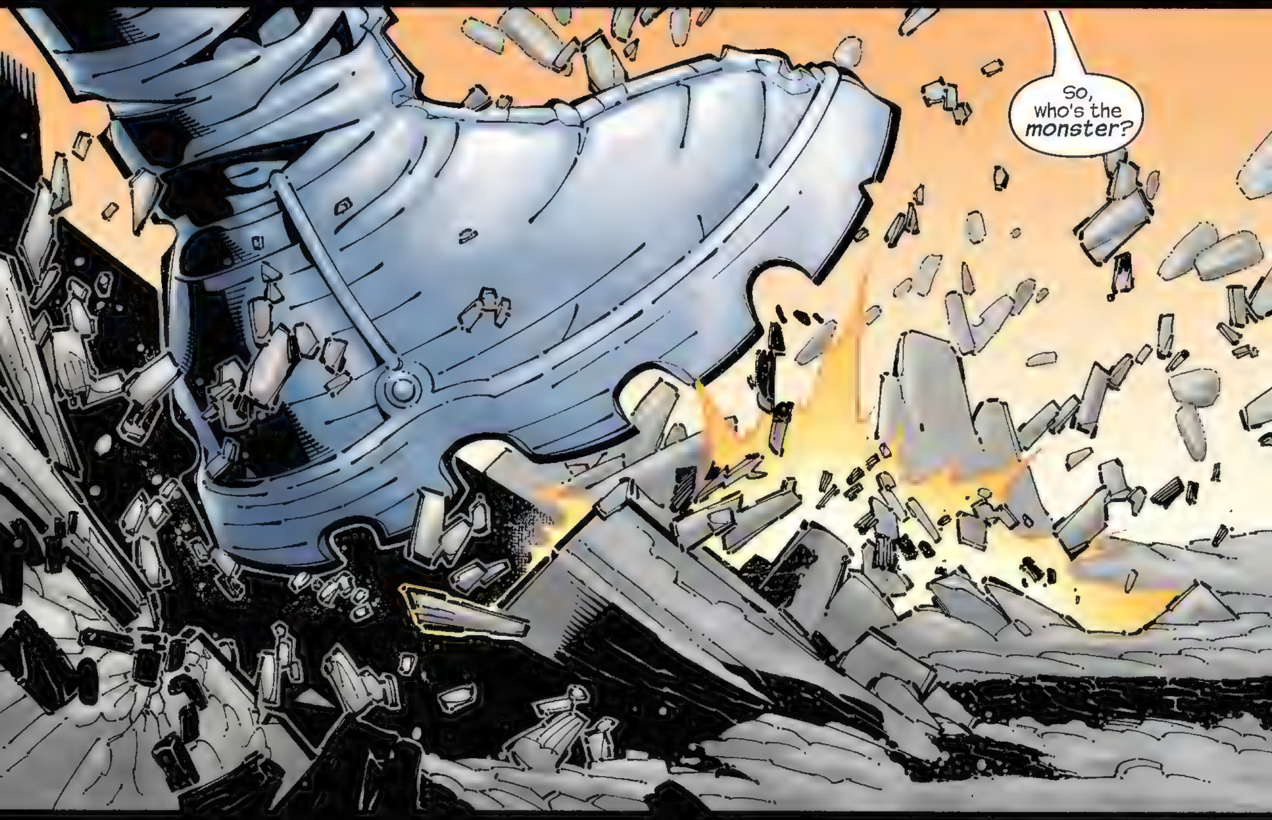

Weapon Fifteen!
Where are you...?

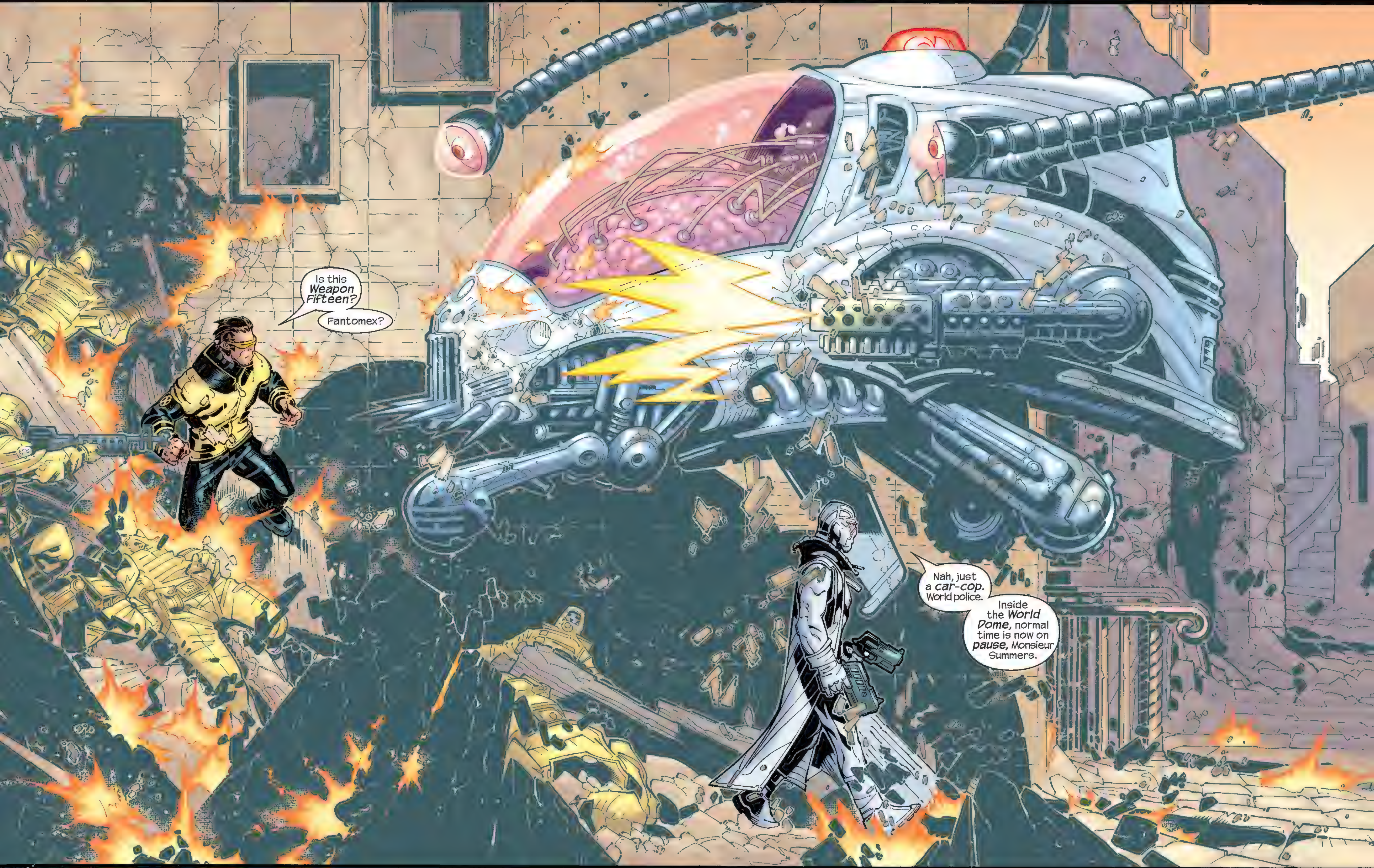


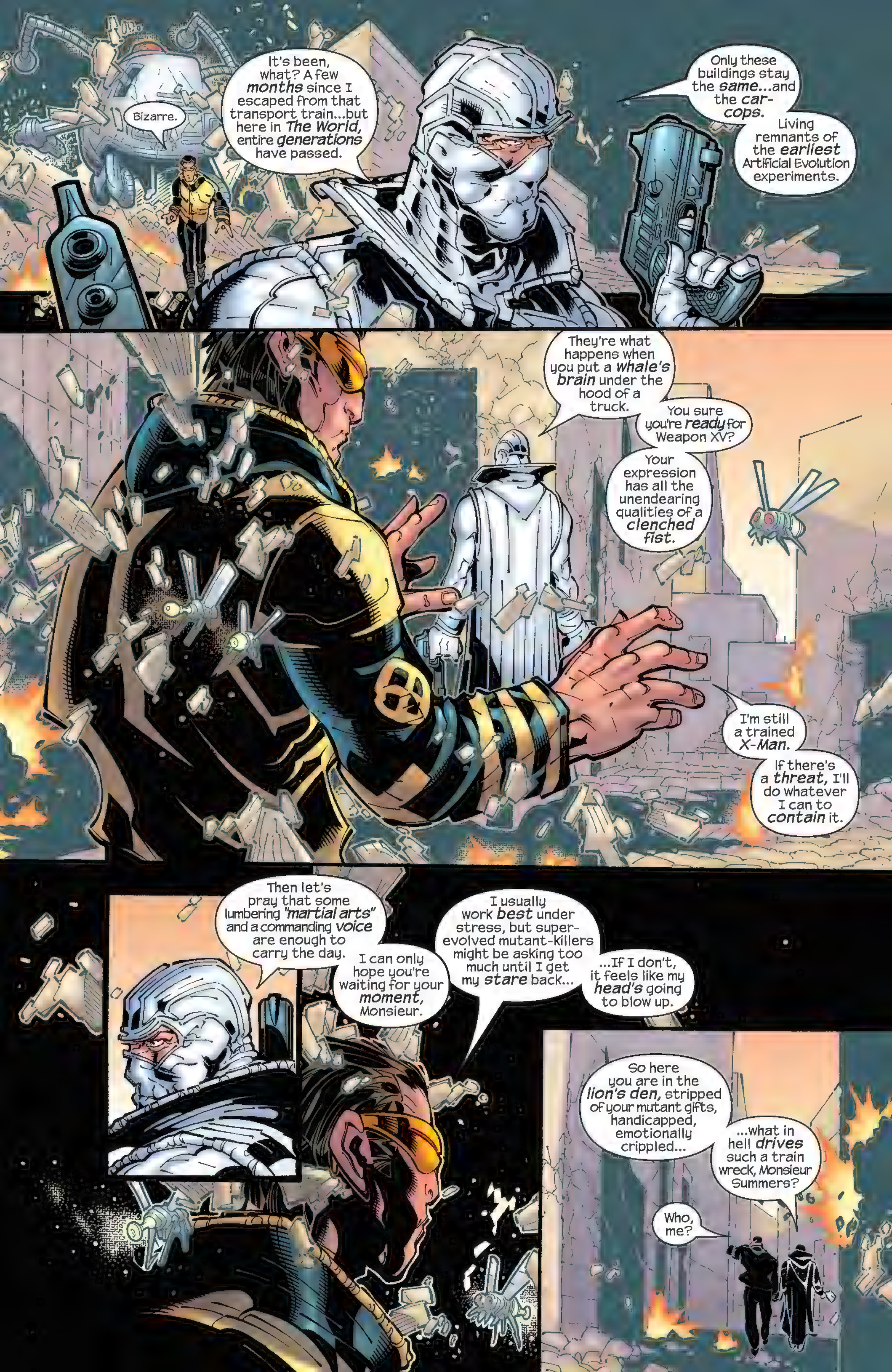
NEW X-MEN #144
"ASSAULT ON WEAPON PLUS PART THREE: THE FLESH"

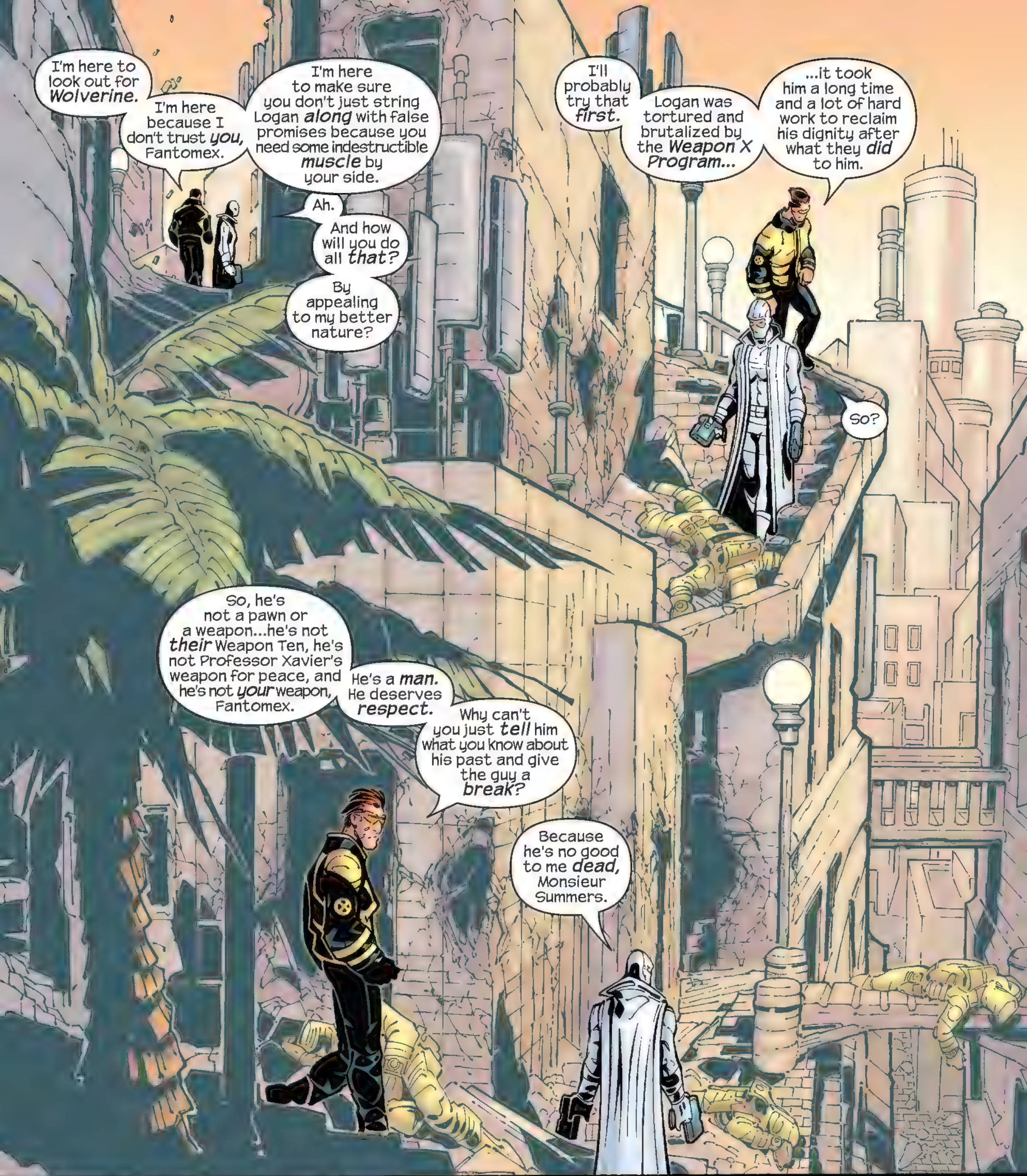
ASSAULT ON WEAPON PLUS PART 3 OF 4

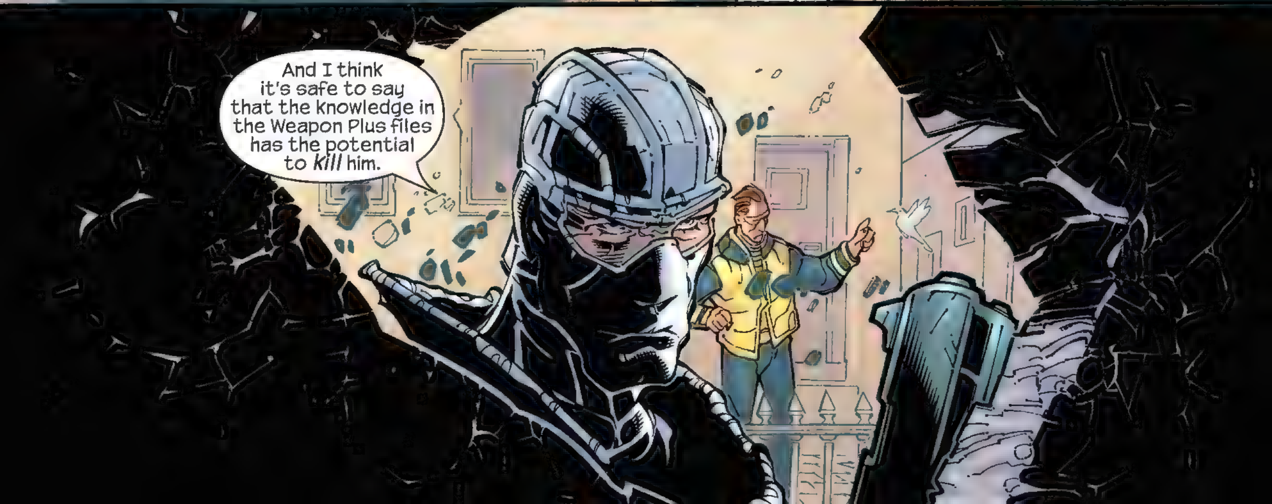
THE FLESH

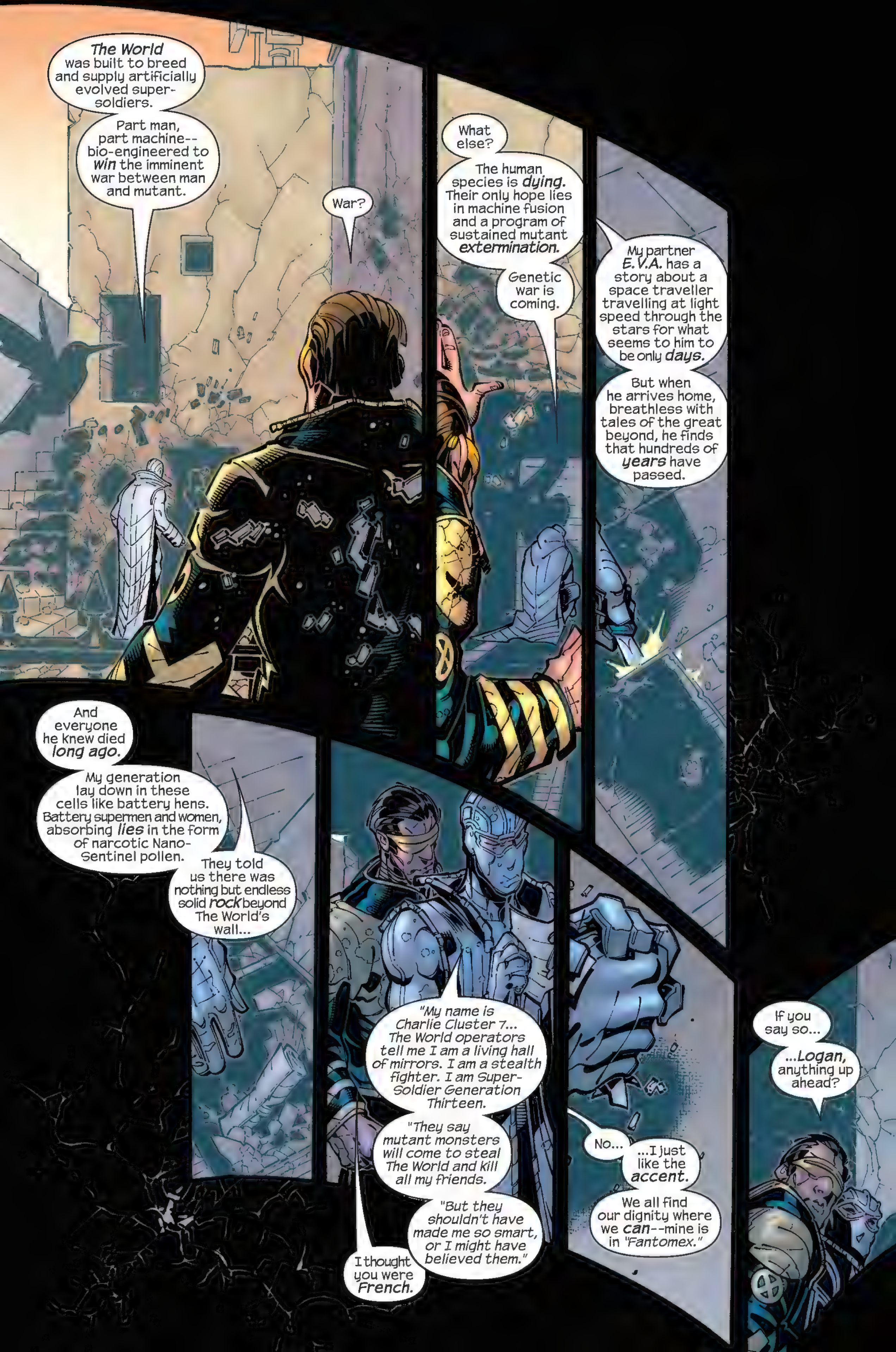

So, who's the *monster?*

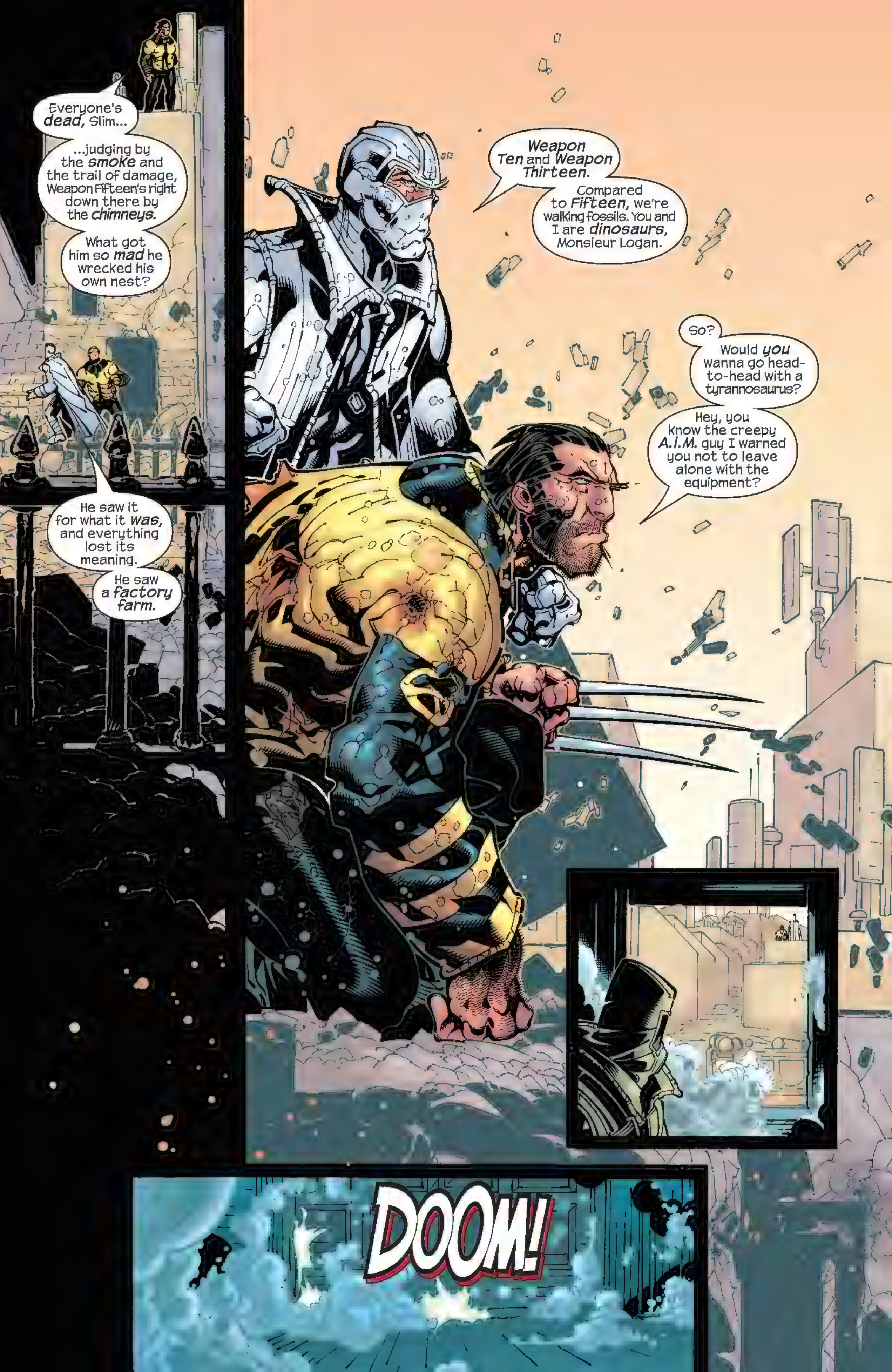

Is this *Weapon Fifteen?*
Fantomex?
Nah, just a *car-cop.* World police.
Inside the *World Dome,* normal time is now on *pause,* Monsieur Summers.

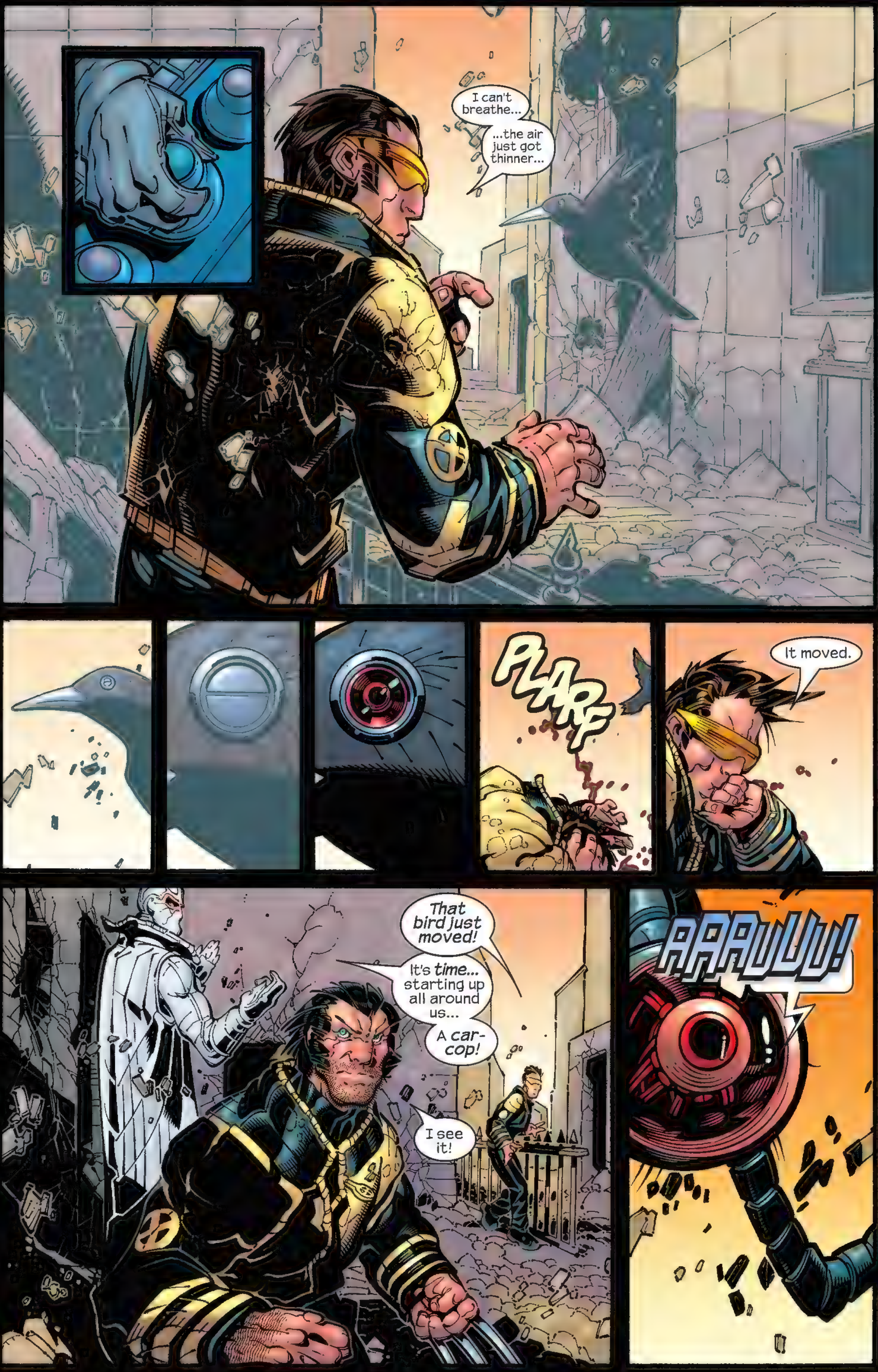

Bizarre.
It's been, what? A few *months* since I escaped from that transport train...but here in *The World,* entire *generations* have passed.
Only these buildings stay the *same*...and the *car-cops.*
Living remnants of the *earliest* Artificial Evolution experiments.
They're what happens when you put a *whale's brain* under the hood of a truck.
You sure you're *ready* for Weapon XV?
Your expression has all the unendearing qualities of a *clenched fist.*
I'm still a trained *X-Man.*
If there's a *threat,* I'll do whatever I can to *contain* it.
Then let's pray that some lumbering *"martial arts"* and a commanding *voice* are enough to carry the day.
I can only hope you're waiting for your *moment,* Monsieur.
I usually work *best* under stress, but super-evolved mutant-killers might be asking too much until I get my *stare* back...
...If I don't, it feels like my *head's* going to blow up.
So here you are in the *lion's den,* stripped of your mutant gifts, handicapped, emotionally crippled...
...what in hell *drives* such a train wreck, Monsieur Summers?
Who, me?

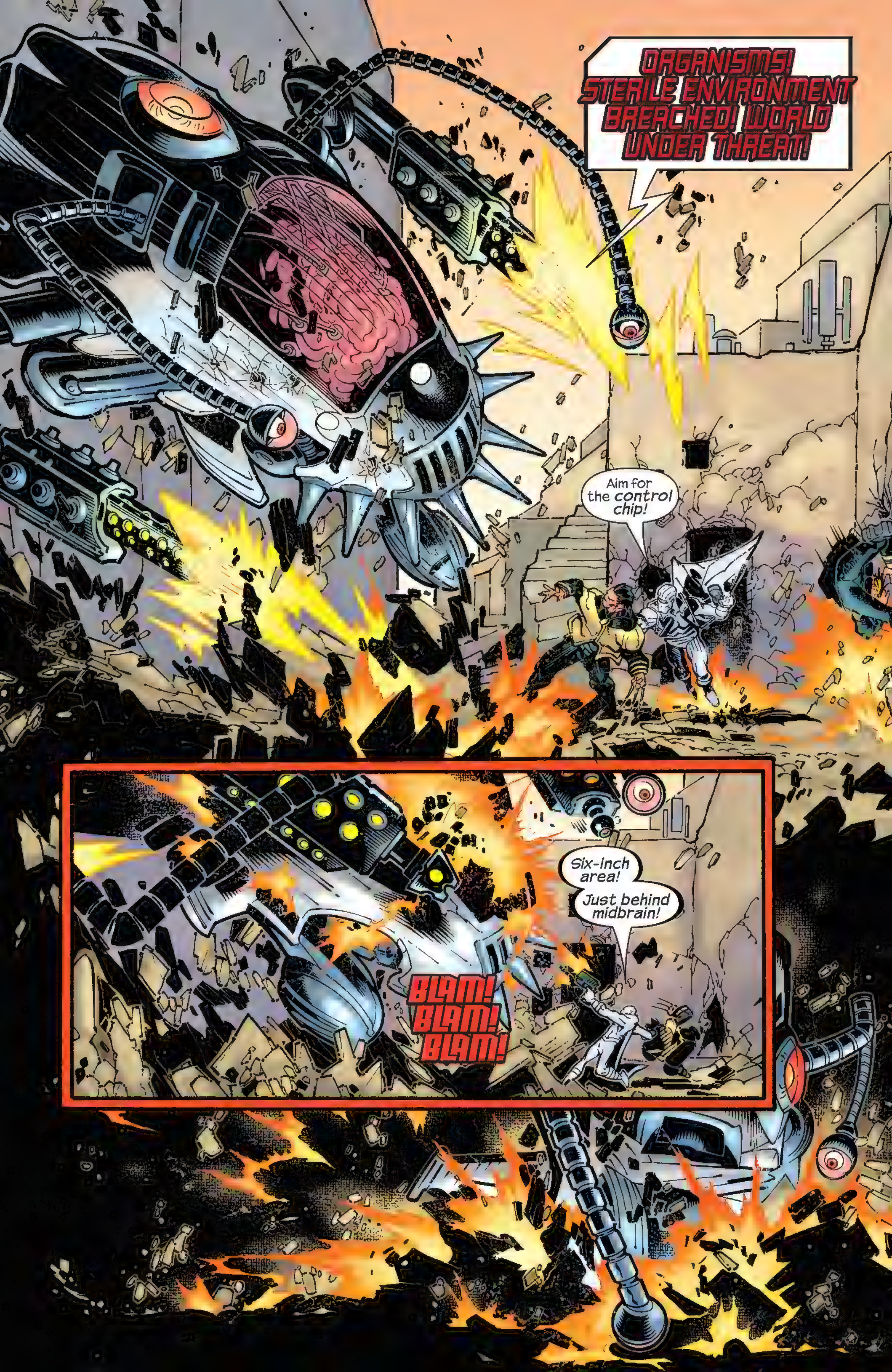

I'm here to look out for *Wolverine.*
I'm here because I don't trust *you,* Fantomex.
I'm here to make sure you don't just string Logan *along* with false promises because you need some indestructible *muscle* by your side.
Ah.
And how will you do all *that?*
By appealing to my better nature?
I'll probably try that *first.*
Logan was tortured and brutalized by the *Weapon X Program...*
...it took him a long time and a lot of hard work to reclaim his dignity after what they *did* to him.
So?
So, he's not a pawn or a weapon...he's not *their* Weapon Ten, he's not Professor Xavier's weapon for peace, and he's not *your* weapon, Fantomex.
He's a *man.* He deserves *respect.*
Why can't you just *tell* him what you know about his past and give the guy a *break?*
Because he's no good to me *dead,* Monsieur Summers.

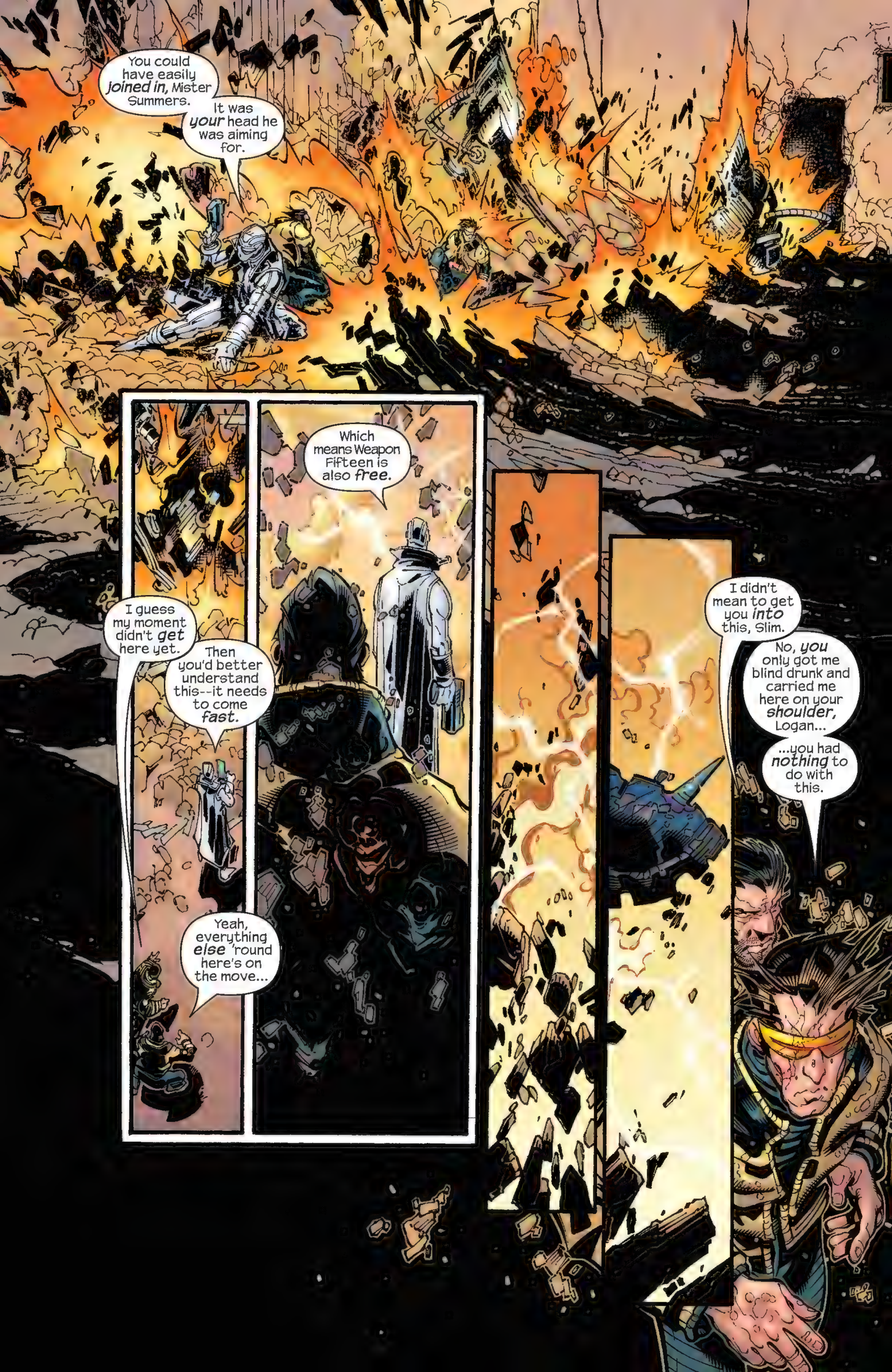

And I think it's safe to say that the knowledge in the Weapon Plus files has the potential to *kill* him.

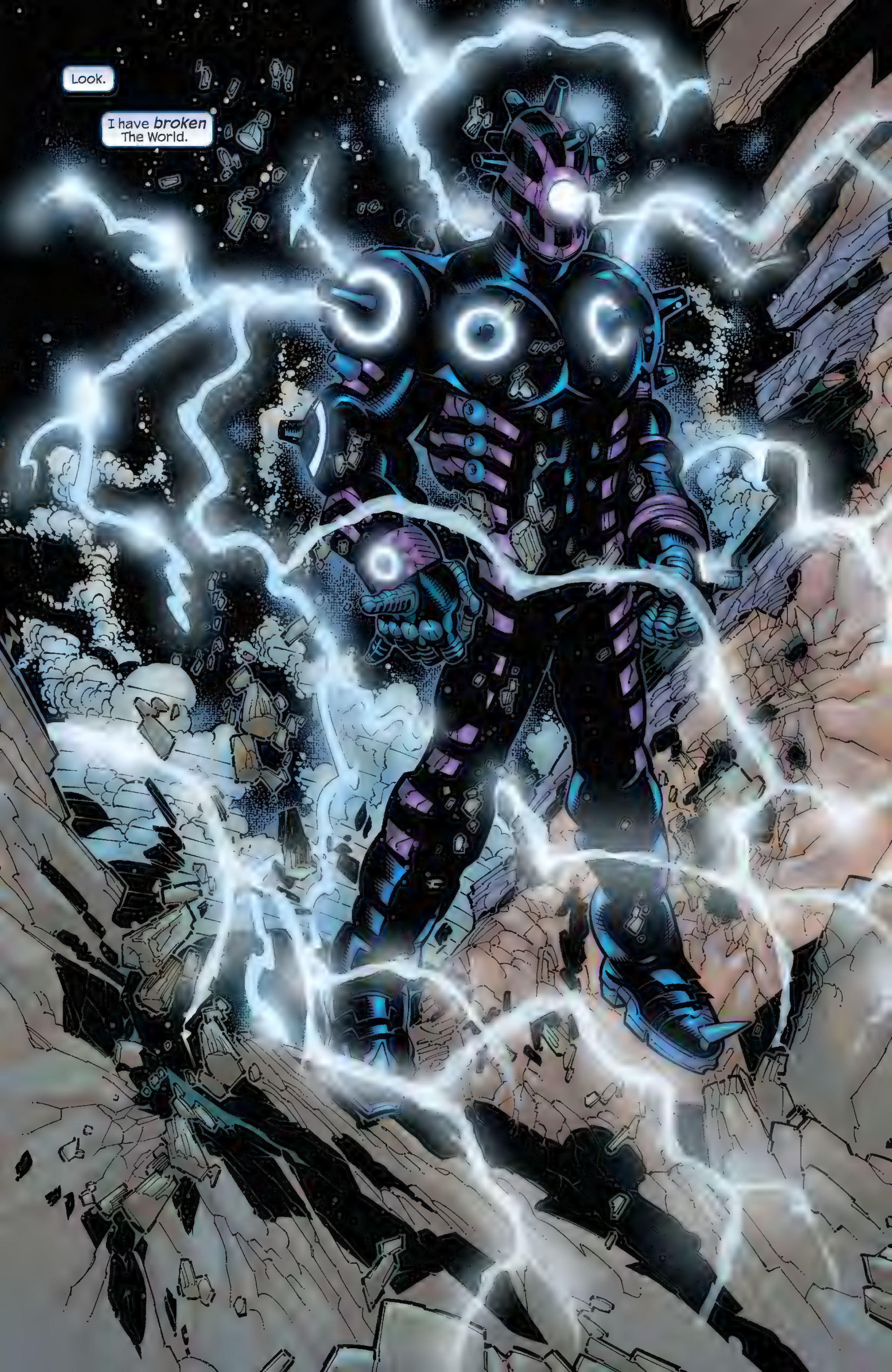

The World was built to breed and supply artificially evolved super-soldiers.
Part man, part machine--bio-engineered to win the imminent war between man and mutant.
War?
What else?
The human species is dying. Their only hope lies in machine fusion and a program of sustained mutant extermination.
Genetic war is coming.
My partner E.V.A. has a story about a space traveller travelling at light speed through the stars for what seems to him to be only days.
But when he arrives home, breathless with tales of the great beyond, he finds that hundreds of years have passed.
And everyone he knew died long ago.
My generation lay down in these cells like battery hens. Battery supermen and women, absorbing lies in the form of narcotic Nano-Sentinel pollen.
They told us there was nothing but endless solid rock beyond The World's wall...
"My name is Charlie Cluster 7... The World operators tell me I am a living hall of mirrors. I am a stealth fighter. I am Super-Soldier Generation Thirteen.
"They say mutant monsters will come to steal The World and kill all my friends.
"But they shouldn't have made me so smart, or I might have believed them."
I thought you were French.
No...
...I just like the accent.
We all find our dignity where we can--mine is in "Fantomex."
If you say so...
...Logan, anything up ahead?

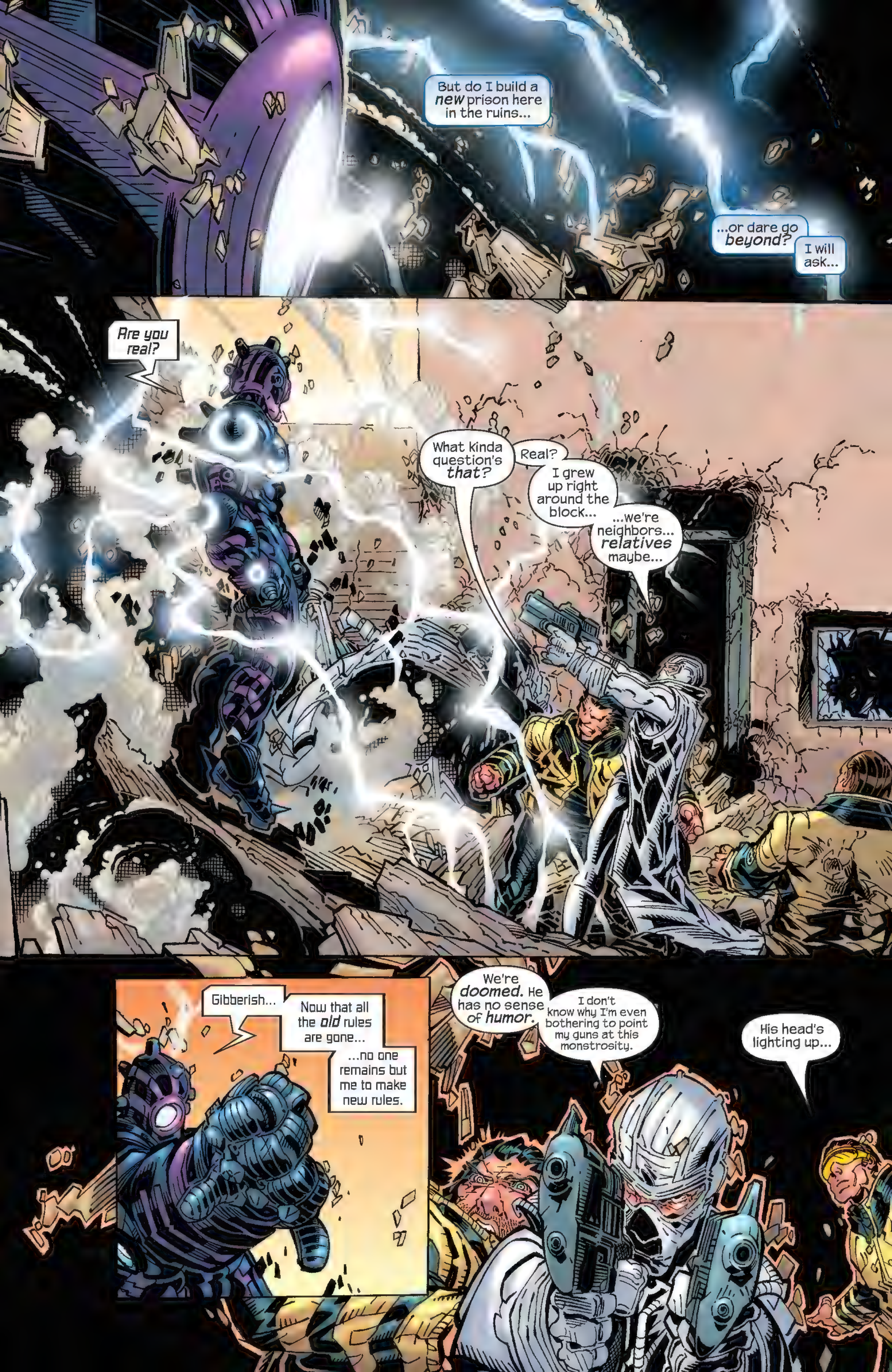

Everyone's *dead,* Slim...
...judging by the *smoke* and the trail of damage, Weapon Fifteen's right down there by the *chimneys.*
What got him so *mad* he wrecked his own nest?
He saw it for what it *was,* and everything lost its meaning.
He saw a *factory farm.*
Weapon Ten and *Weapon Thirteen.*
Compared to *Fifteen,* we're walking fossils. You and I are *dinosaurs,* Monsieur Logan.
So?
Would *you* wanna go head-to-head with a tyrannosaurus?
Hey, you know the creepy *A.I.M.* guy I warned you not to leave alone with the equipment?
DOOM!

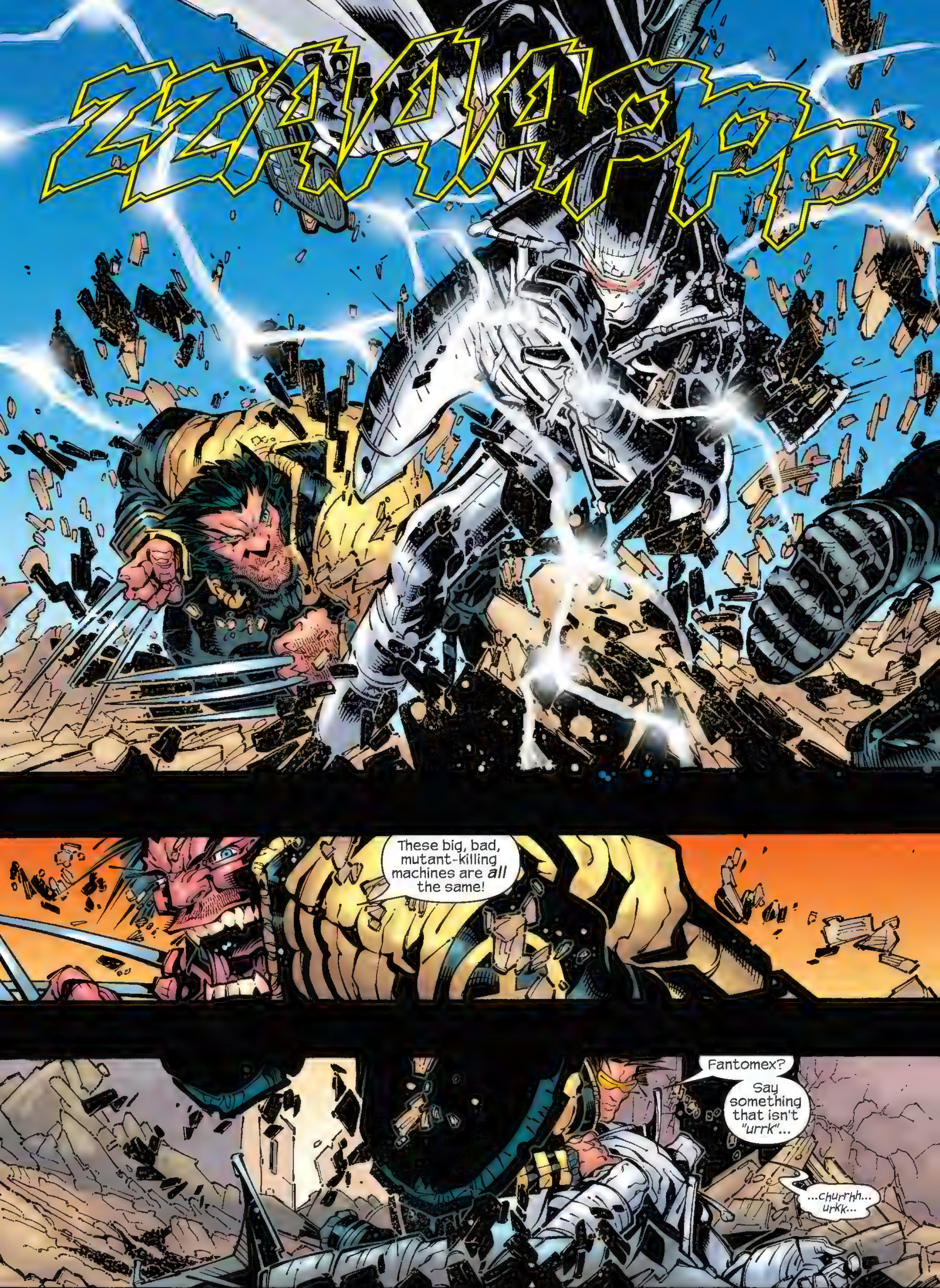

I can't breathe...
...the air just got thinner...
PLARF
It moved.
That bird just moved!
It's time... starting up all around us...
A car-cop!
I see it!
AAAUUU!

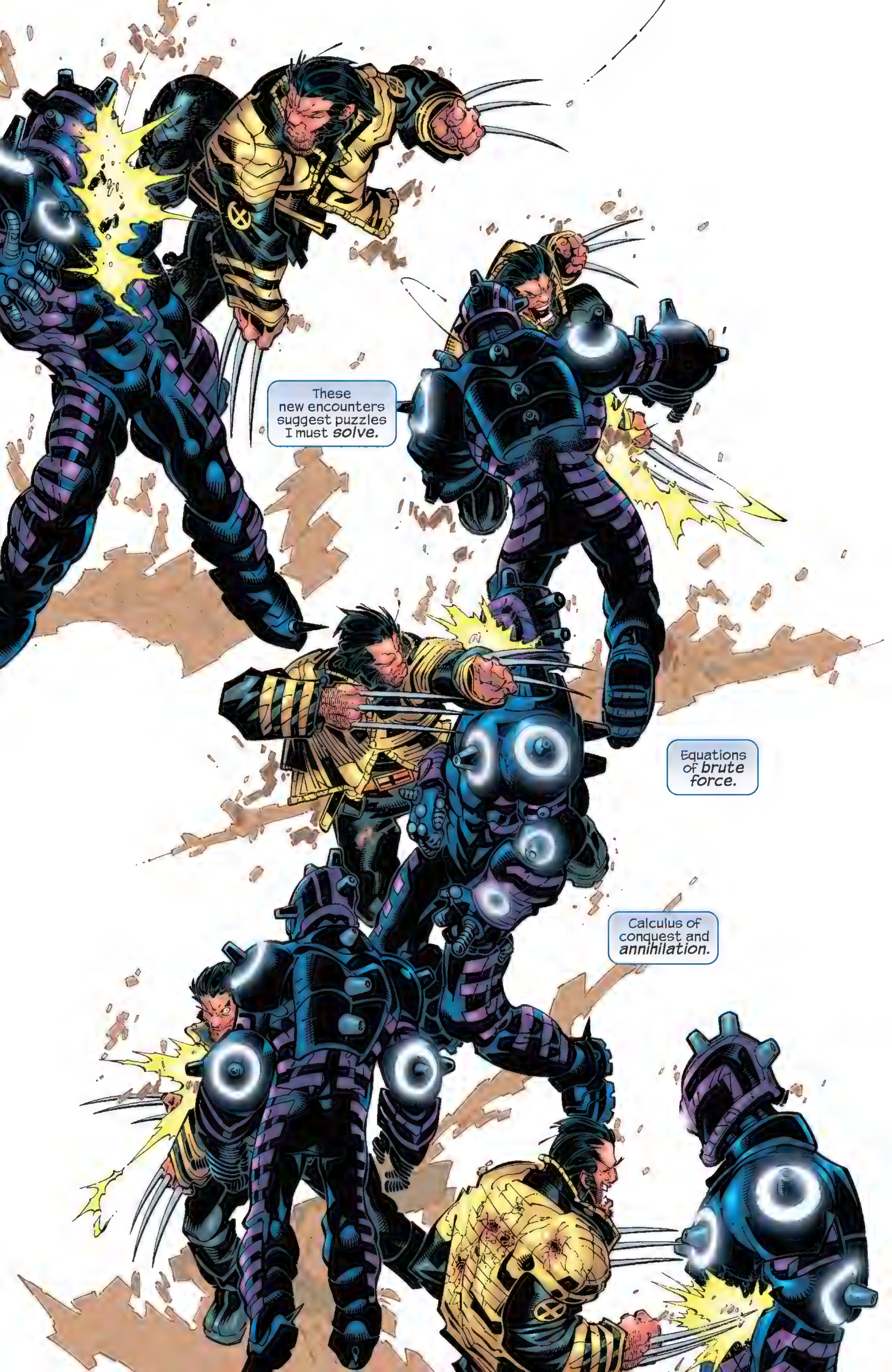

ORGANISMS! STERILE ENVIRONMENT BREACHED! WORLD UNDER THREAT!
Aim for the control chip!
Six-inch area!
Just behind midbrain!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

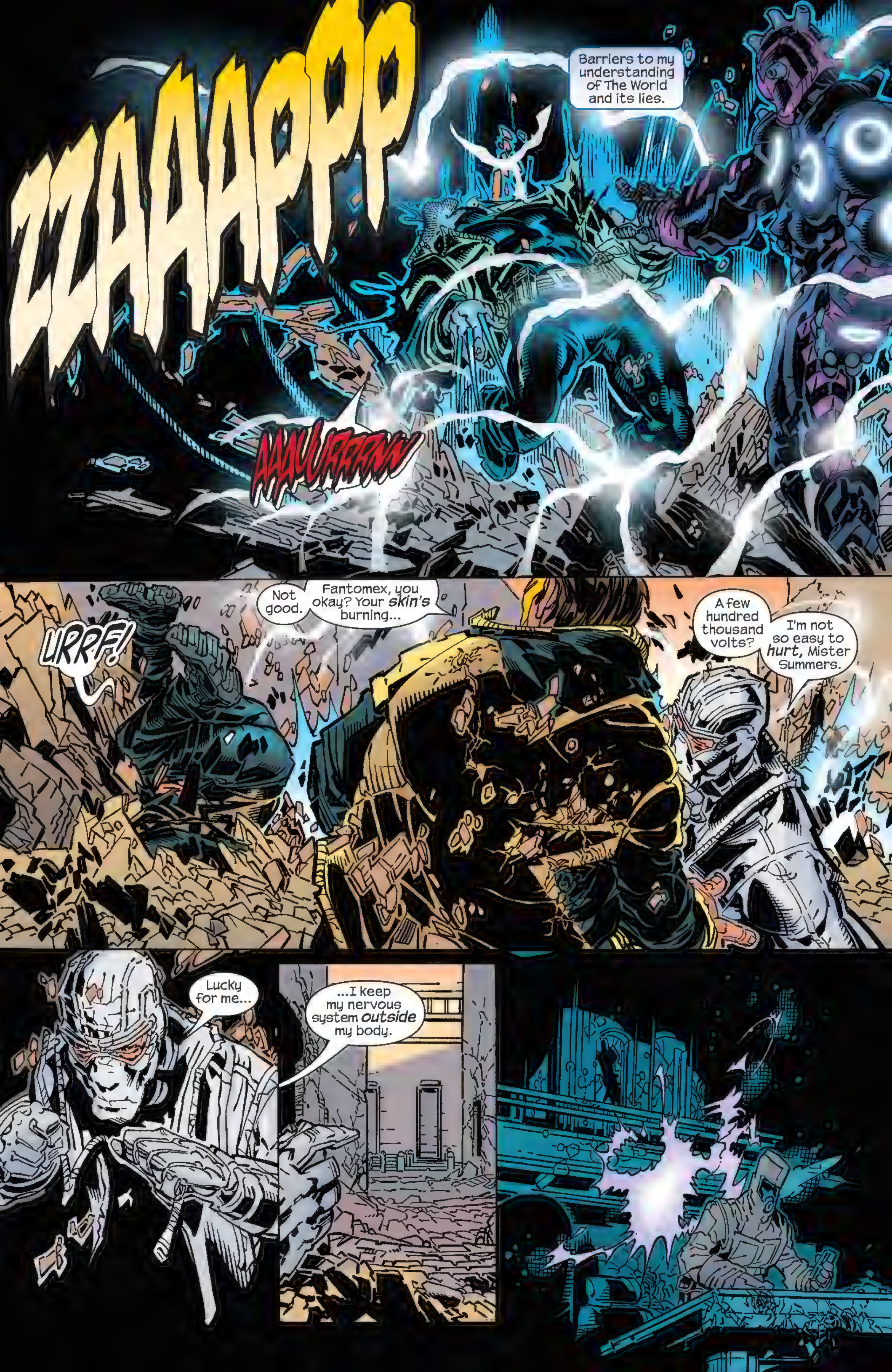

You could have easily *joined in*, Mister Summers.
It was *your* head he was aiming for.
Which means Weapon Fifteen is also *free*.
I guess my moment didn't *get* here yet.
Then you'd better understand this--it needs to come *fast*.
Yeah, everything *else* 'round here's on the move...
I didn't mean to get you *into* this, Slim.
No, *you* only got me blind drunk and carried me here on your *shoulder*, Logan...
...you had *nothing* to do with this.

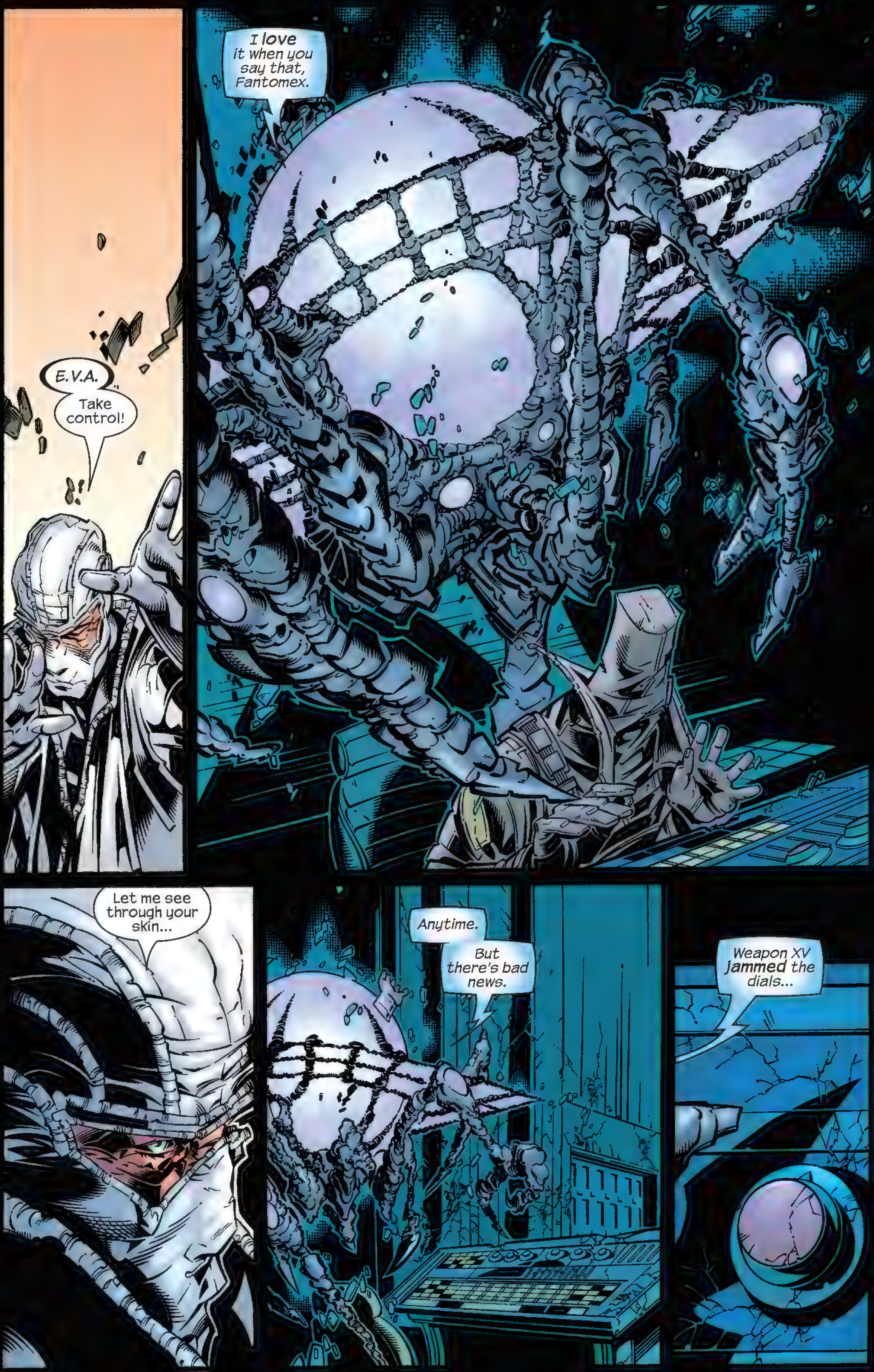

Look.
I have *broken* The World.

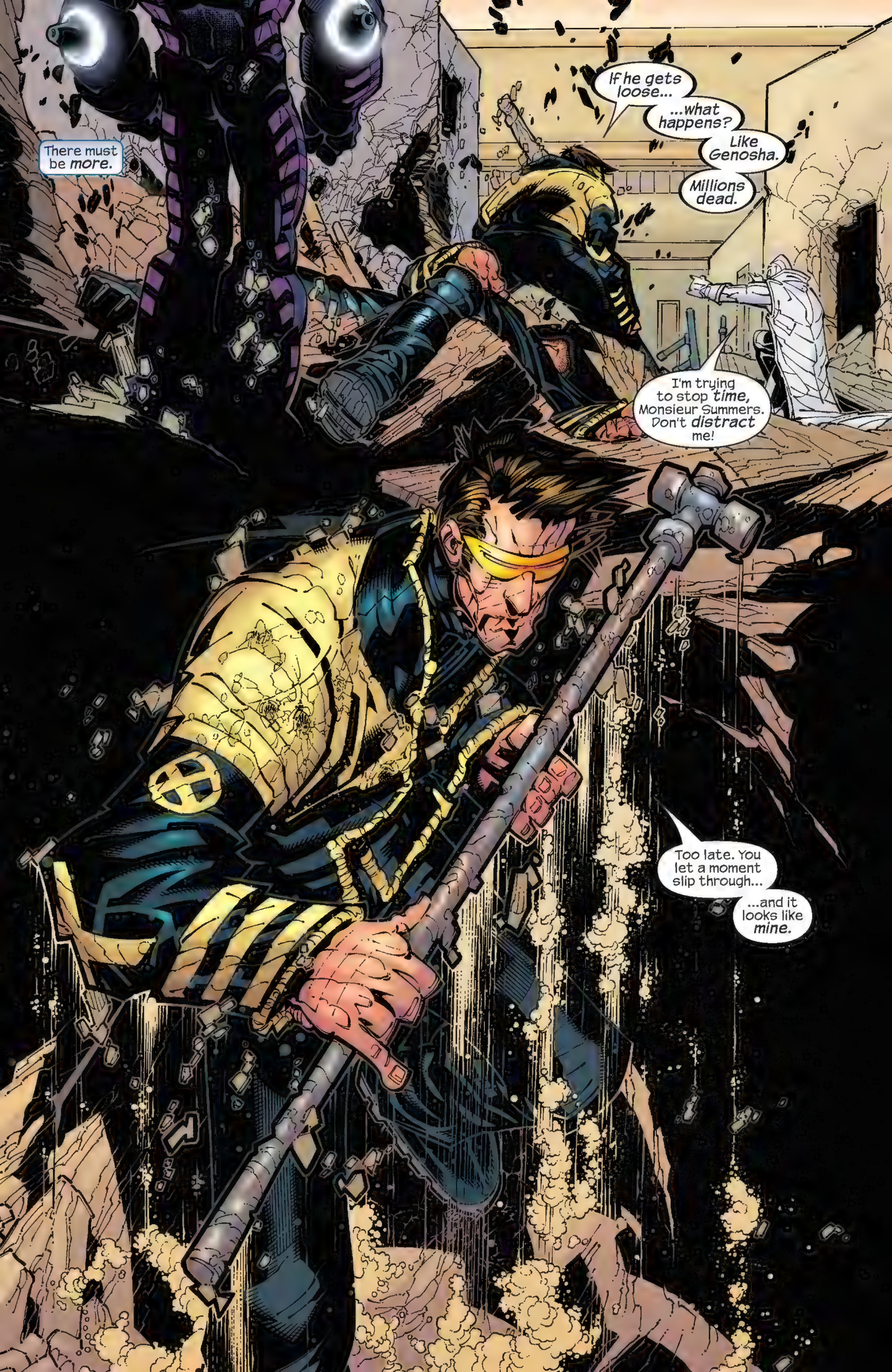

But do I build a *new* prison here in the ruins...
...or dare go *beyond?*
I will ask...
Are you real?
What kinda question's *that?*
Real?
I grew up right around the block...
...we're neighbors... *relatives* maybe...
Gibberish...
Now that all the *old* rules are gone...
...no one remains but me to make new rules.
We're *doomed.* He has no sense of *humor.*
I don't know why I'm even bothering to point my guns at this monstrosity.
His head's lighting up...

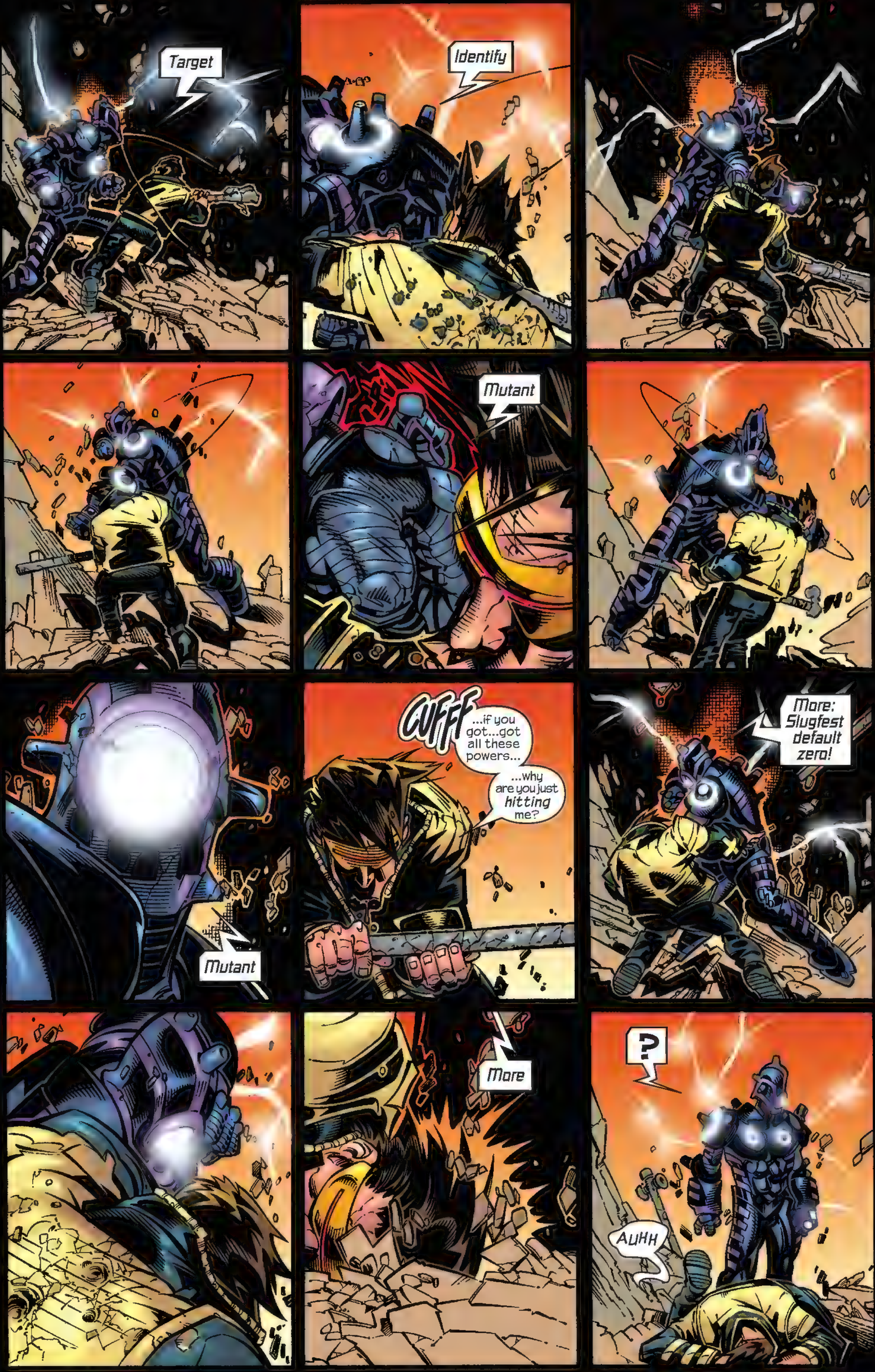

ZZAAAPPP
These big, bad, mutant-killing machines are *all* the same!
Fantomex?
Say something that isn't "urrk"...
...churrhh... urkk...

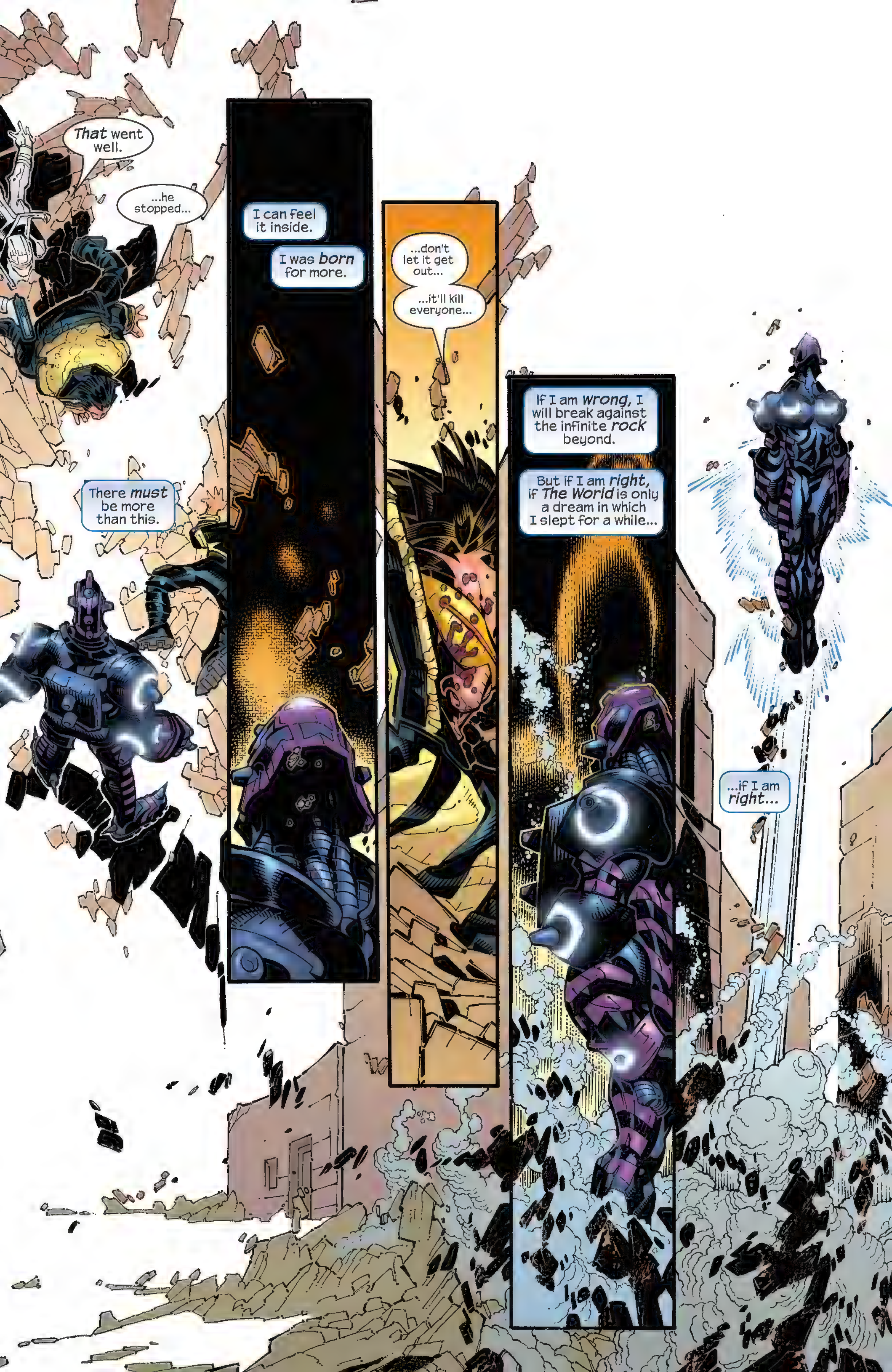

These new encounters suggest puzzles I must *solve*.
Equations of ***brute force.***
Calculus of conquest and ***annihilation.***

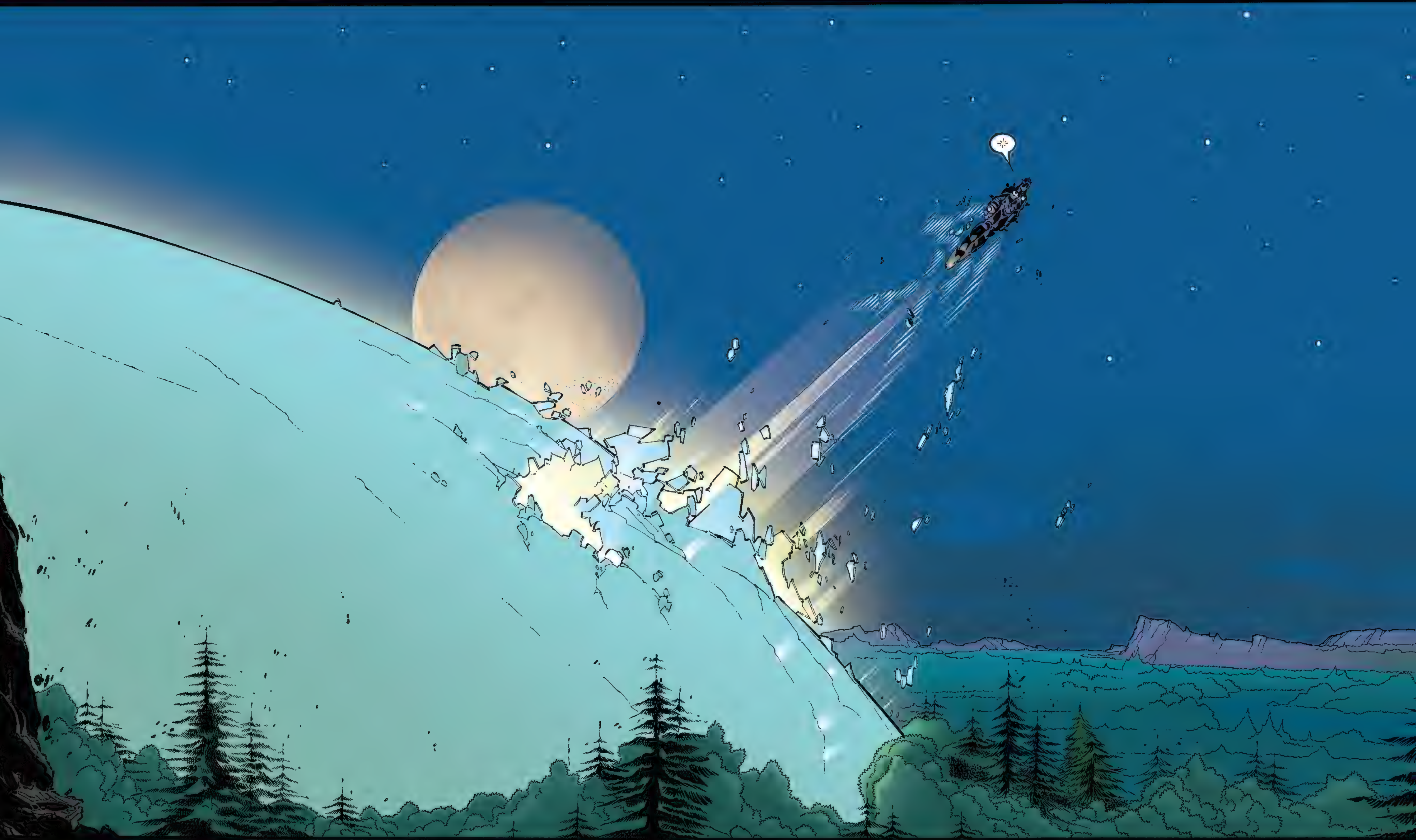

ZZAAAPPP
Barriers to my understanding of The World and its lies.
AAAUURRRRNN
URRF!
Not good.
Fantomex, you okay? Your *skin's* burning...
A few hundred thousand volts?
I'm not so easy to *hurt*, Mister Summers.
Lucky for me...
...I keep my nervous system *outside* my body.

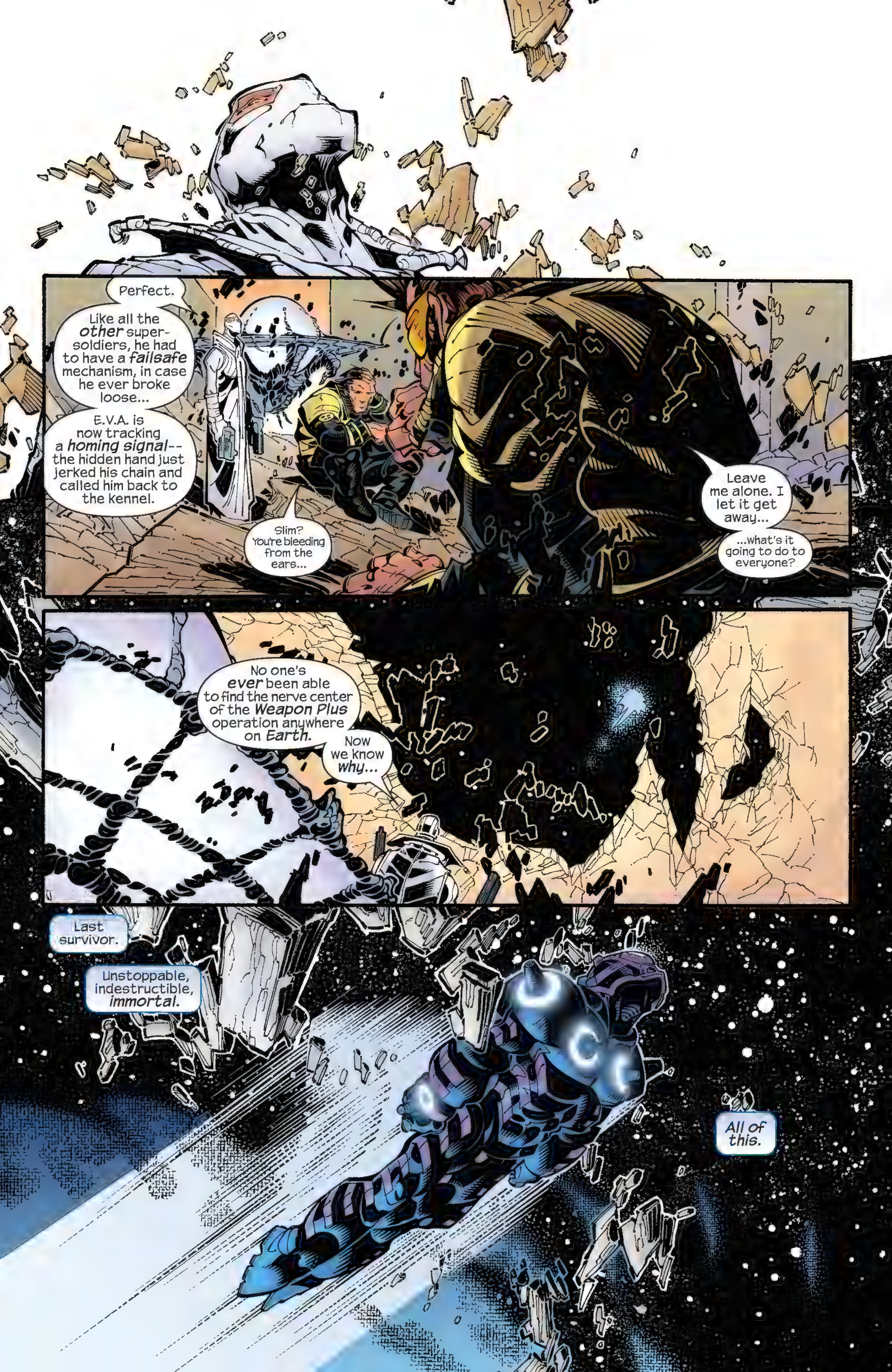

E.V.A.
Take control!
I love it when you say that, Fantomex.
Let me see through your skin...
Anytime.
But there's bad news.
Weapon XV jammed the dials...

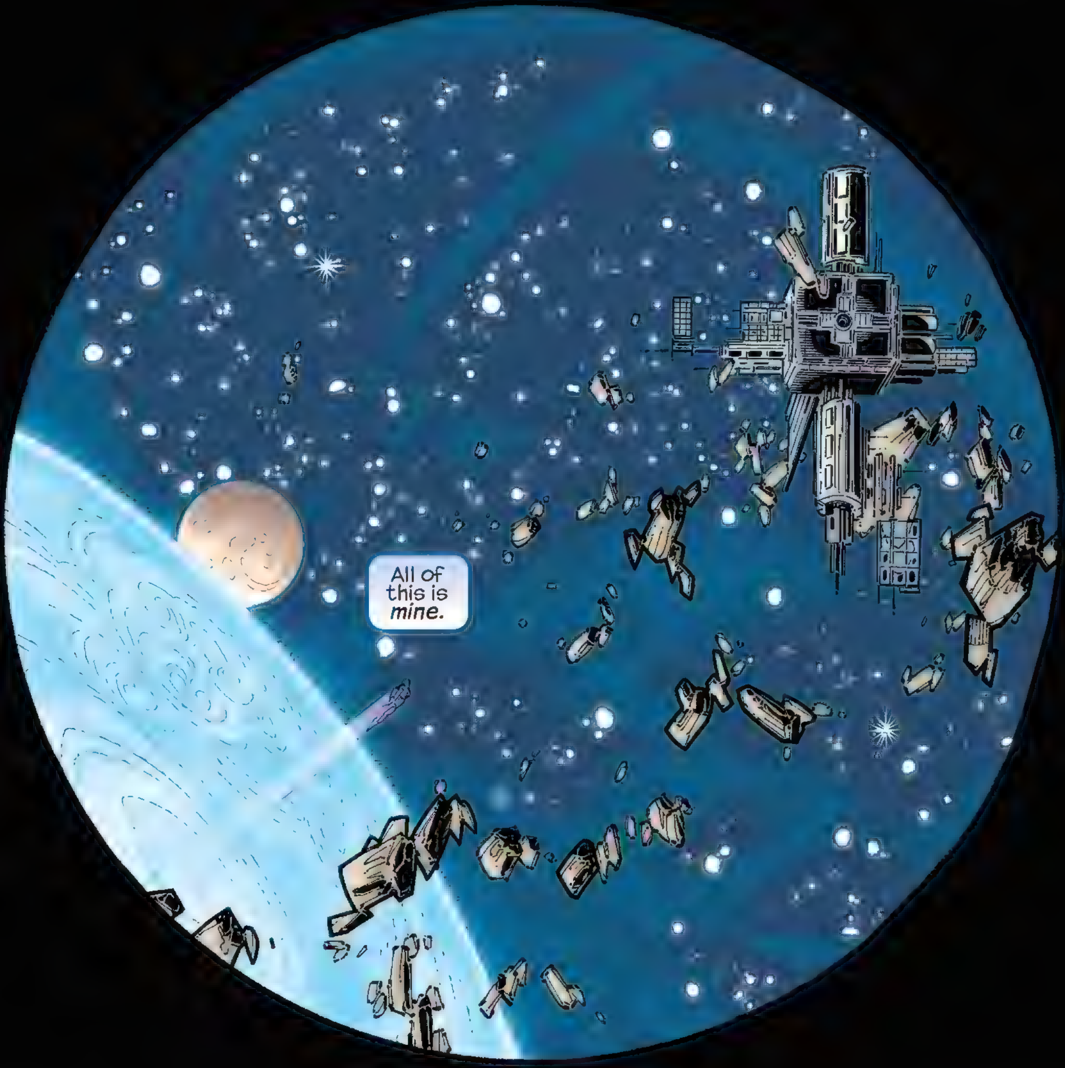

There must be *more.*
If he gets loose...
...what happens?
Like Genosha.
Millions dead.
I'm trying to stop *time,* Monsieur Summers. Don't *distract* me!
Too late. You let a moment slip through...
...and it looks like *mine.*

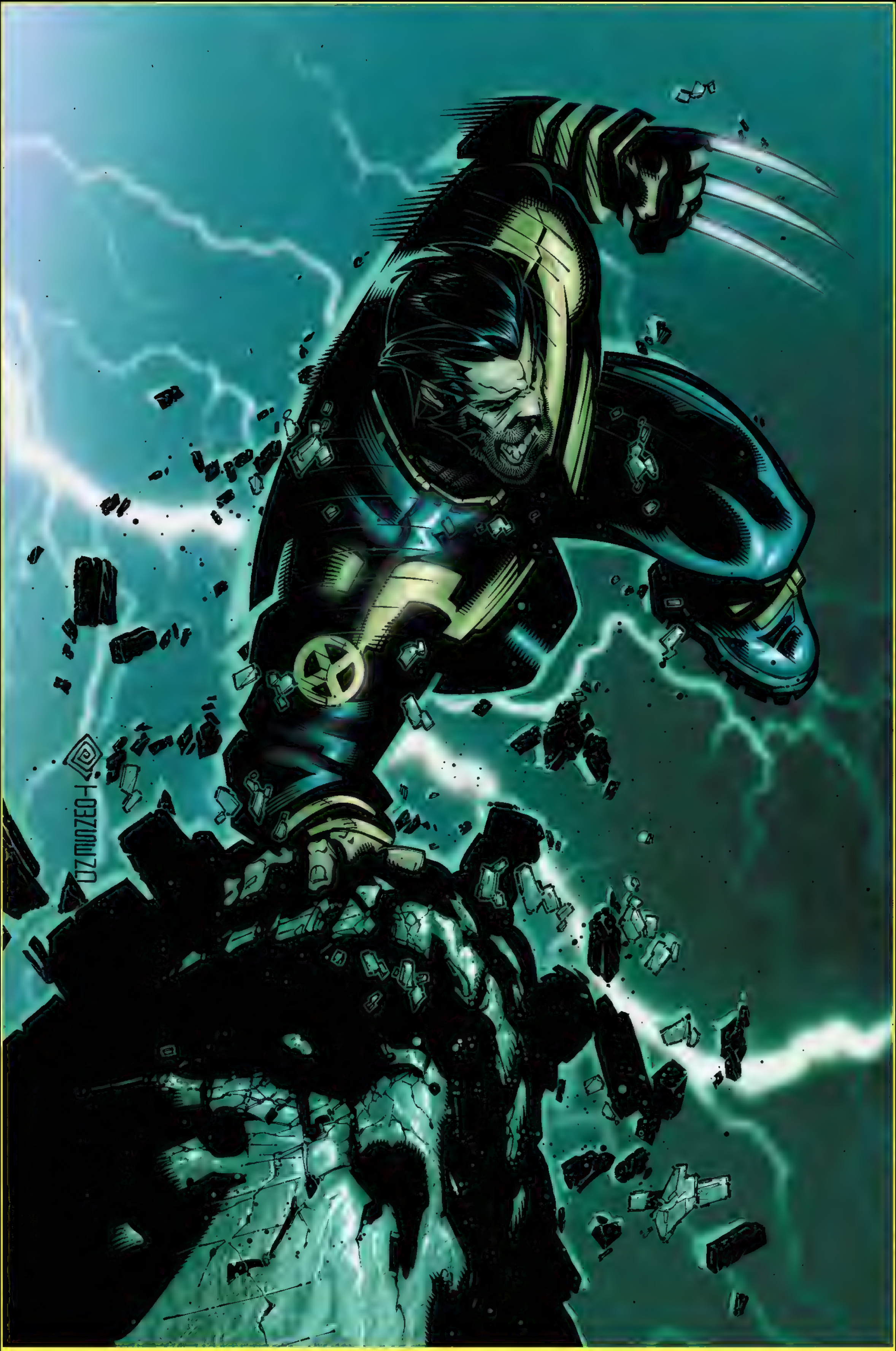

Target
Identify
Mutant
Mutant
CUFFF
...if you got...got all these powers...
...why are you just *hitting* me?
More: Slugfest default zero!
More
?
AUHH


That went well.
...he stopped...
There *must* be more than this.
I can feel it inside.
I was *born* for more.
...don't let it get out...
...it'll kill everyone...
If I am *wrong,* I will break against the infinite *rock* beyond.
But if I am *right,* if *The World* is only a dream in which I slept for a while...
...if I am *right...*



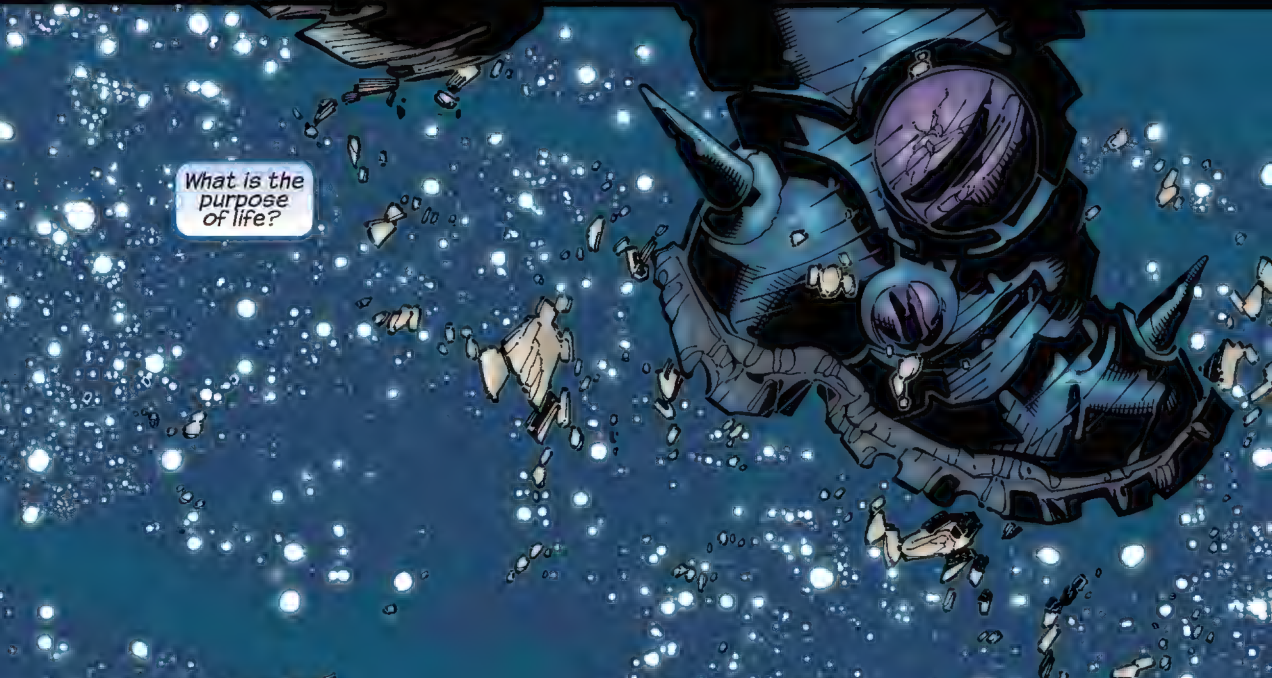

Perfect.
Like all the *other* super-soldiers, he had to have a *failsafe* mechanism, in case he ever broke loose...
E.V.A. is now tracking a *homing signal*-- the hidden hand just jerked his chain and called him back to the kennel.
Slim? You're bleeding from the ears...
Leave me alone. I let it get away...
...what's it going to do to everyone?
No one's *ever* been able to find the nerve center of the *Weapon Plus* operation anywhere on *Earth*.
Now we know *why*...
Last survivor.
Unstoppable, indestructible, *immortal*.
All of this.

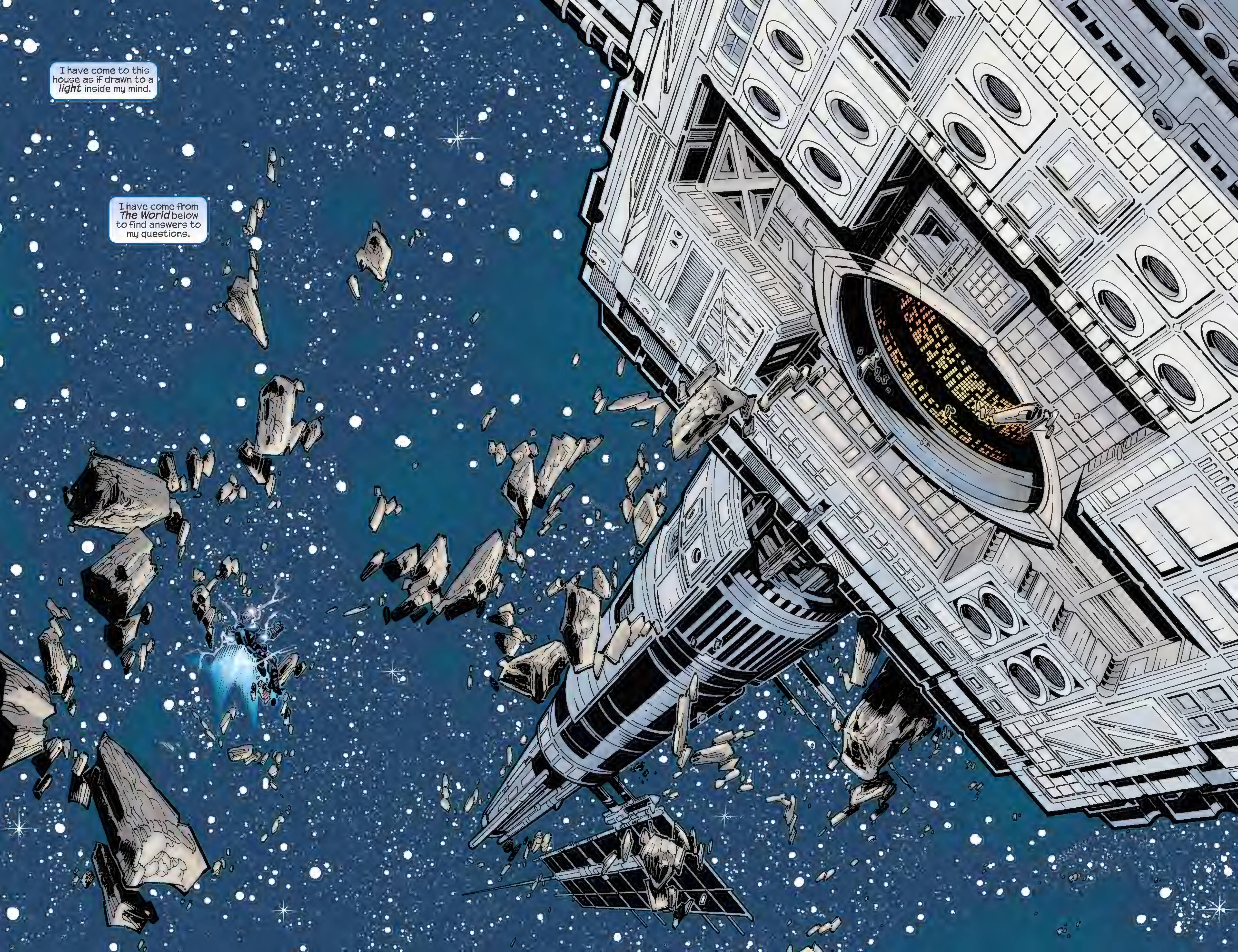

All of this is *mine.*

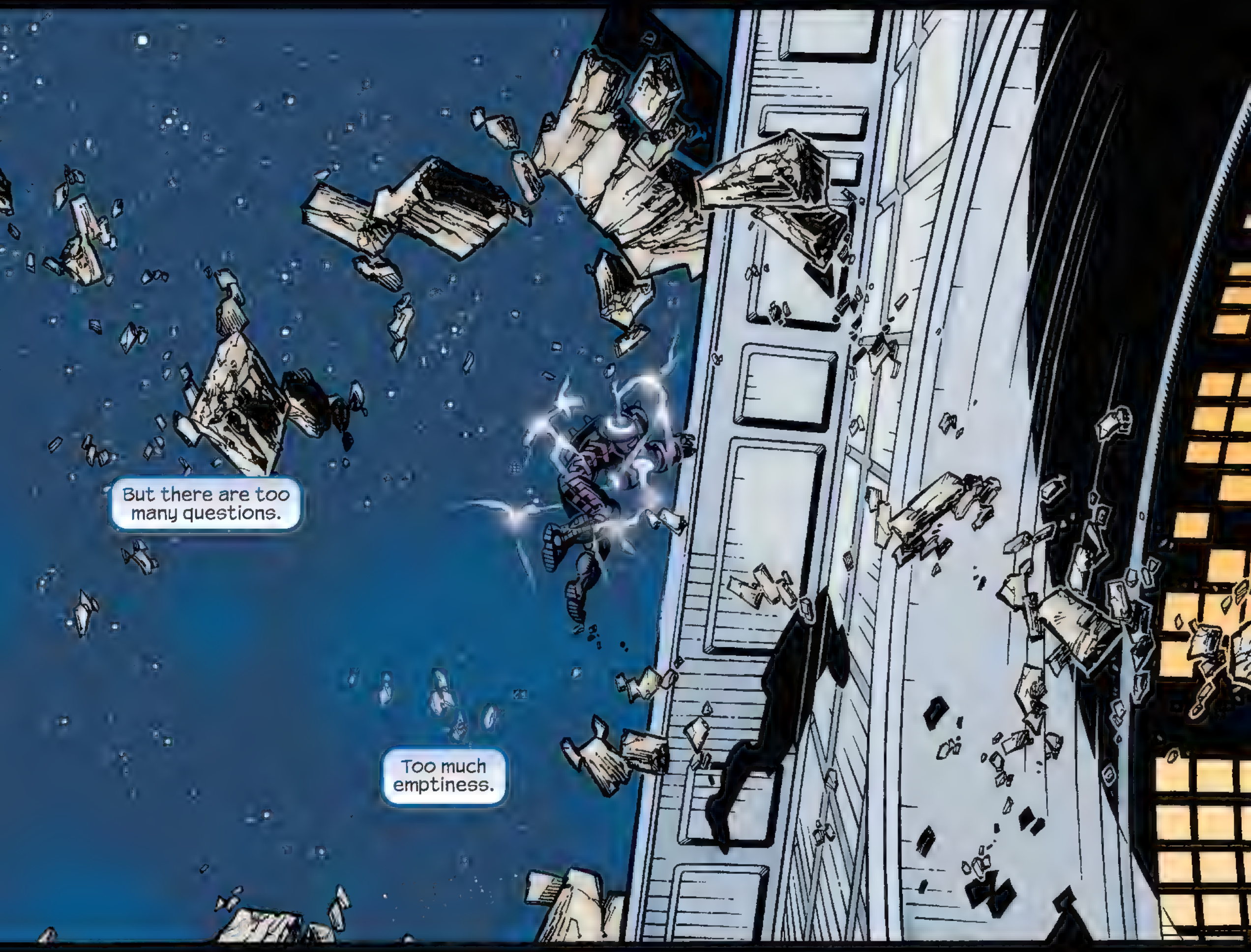


NEW X-MEN #145
"ASSAULT ON WEAPON PLUS PART FOUR: THE DEVIL"

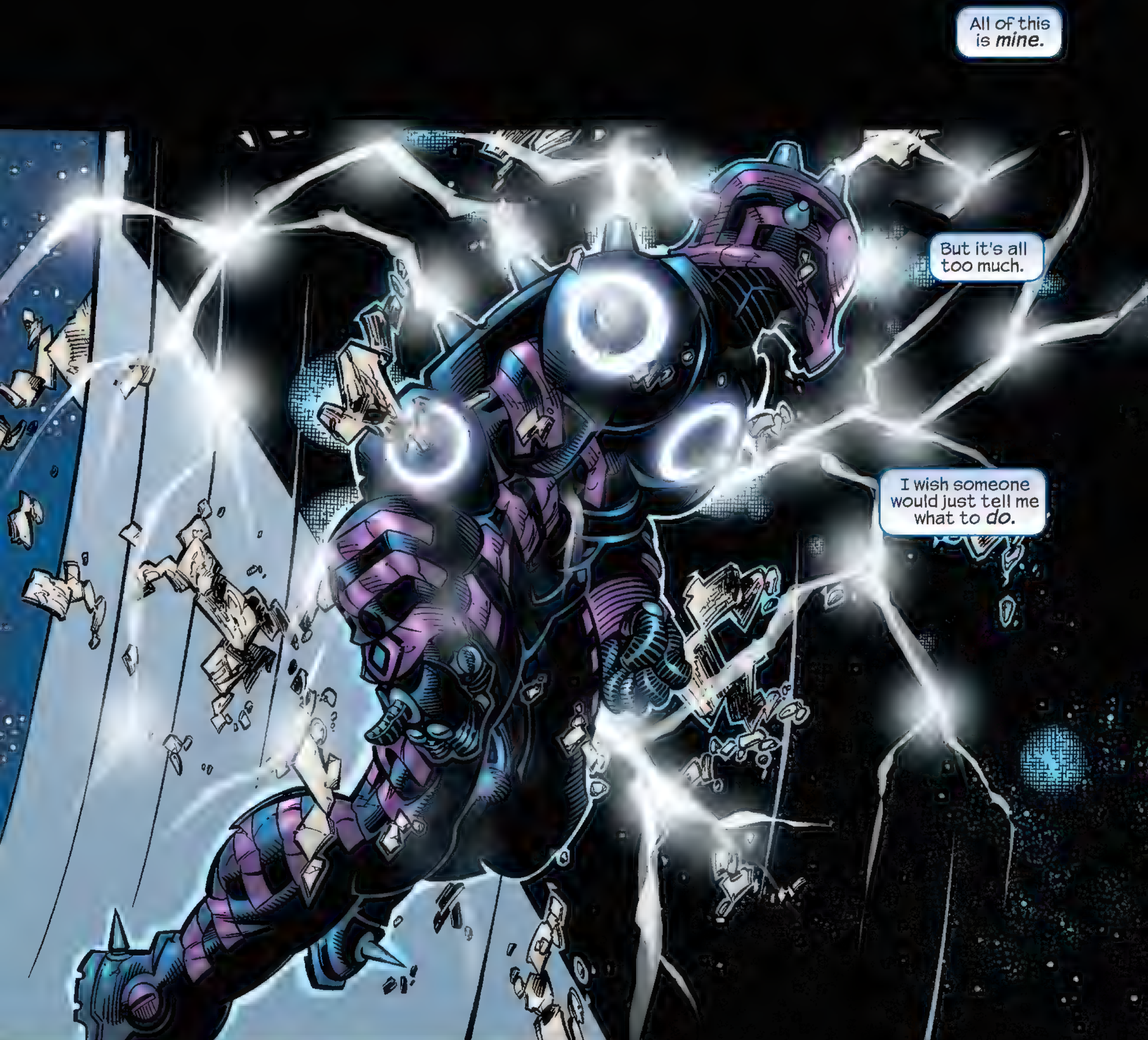
ASSAULT ON WEAPON PLUS PART 4 OF 4 THE DEVIL

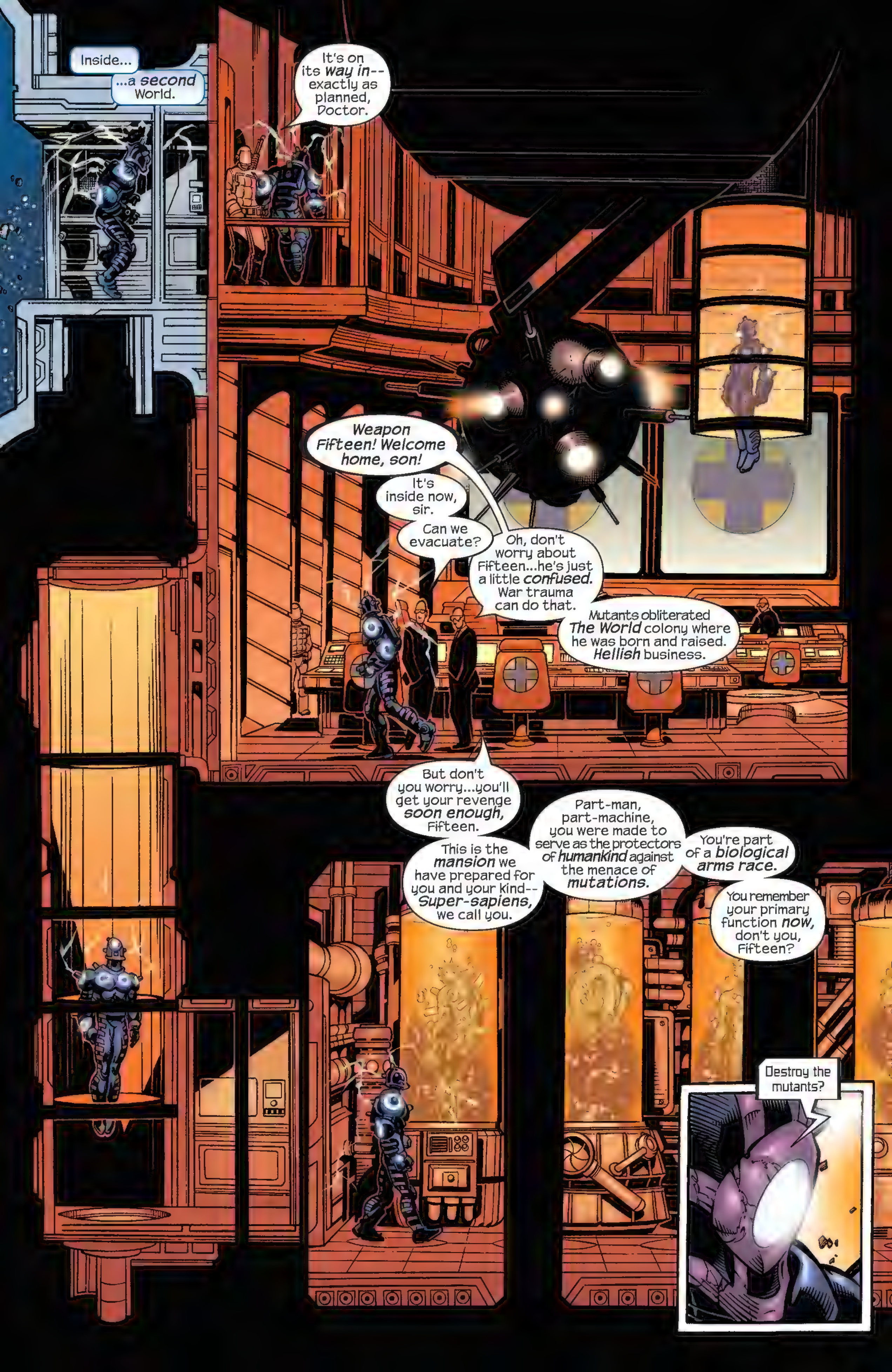

What is the purpose of life?

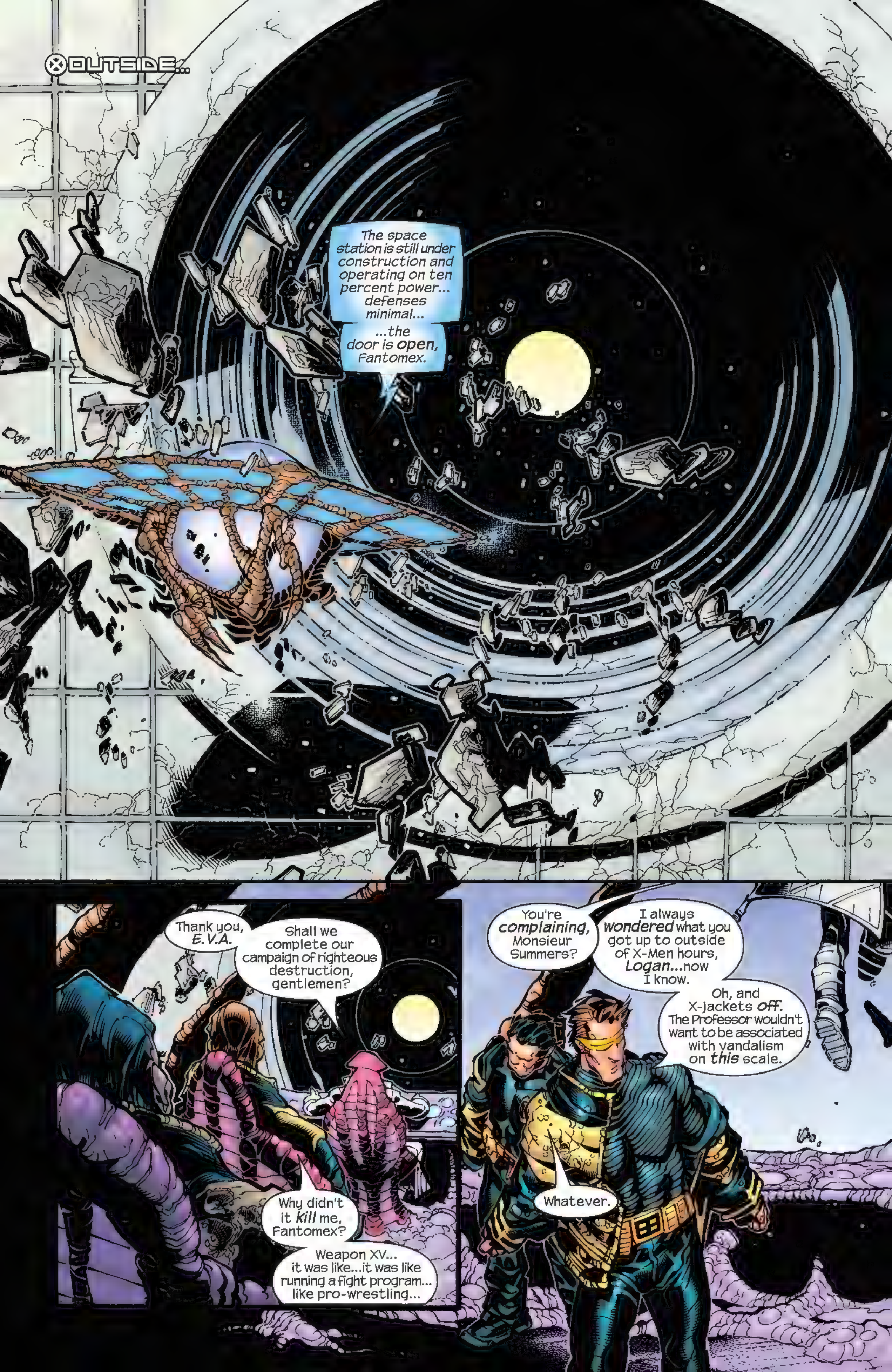

I have come to this house as if drawn to a *light* inside my mind.
I have come from *The World* below to find answers to my questions.

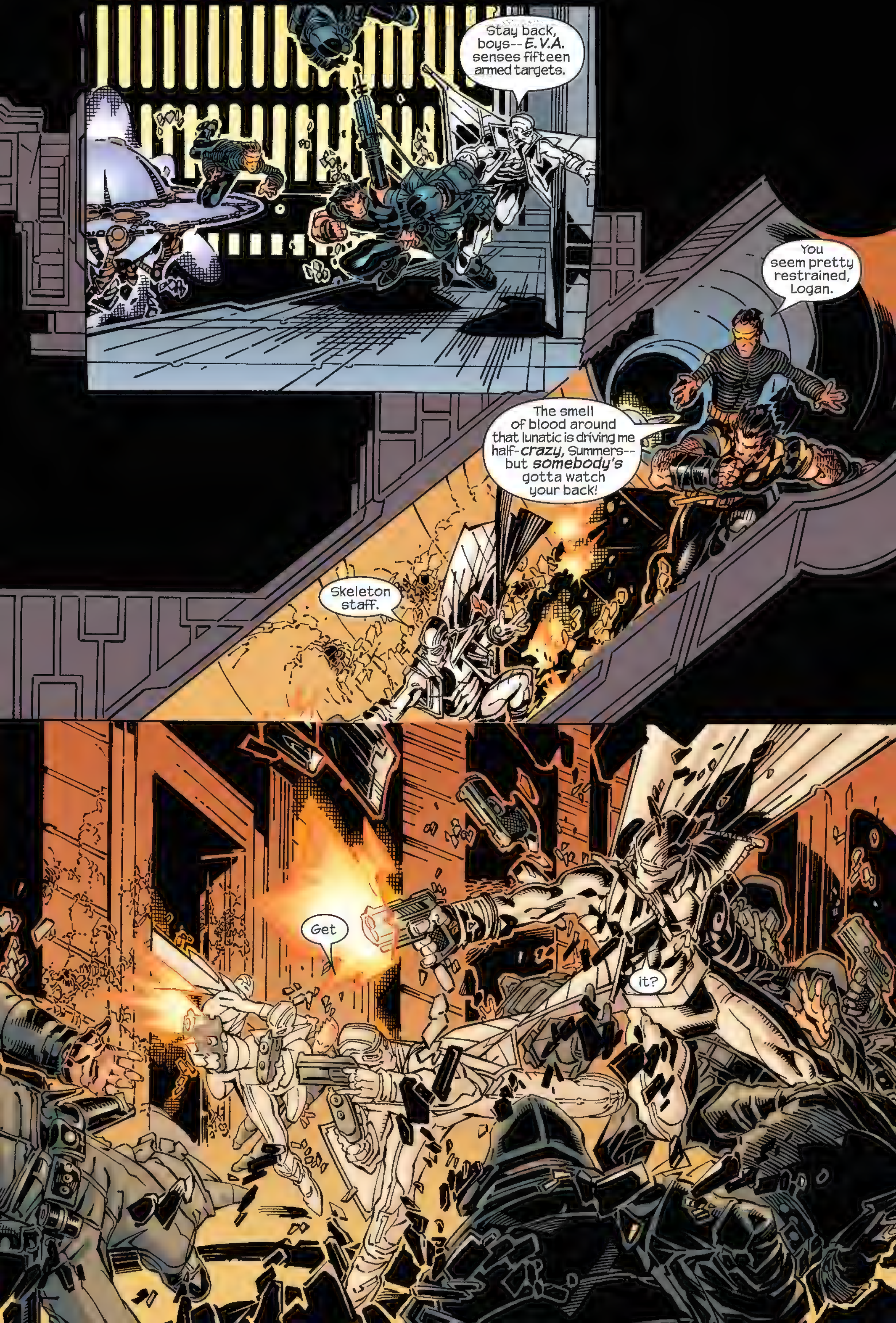

But there are too many questions.
Too much emptiness.

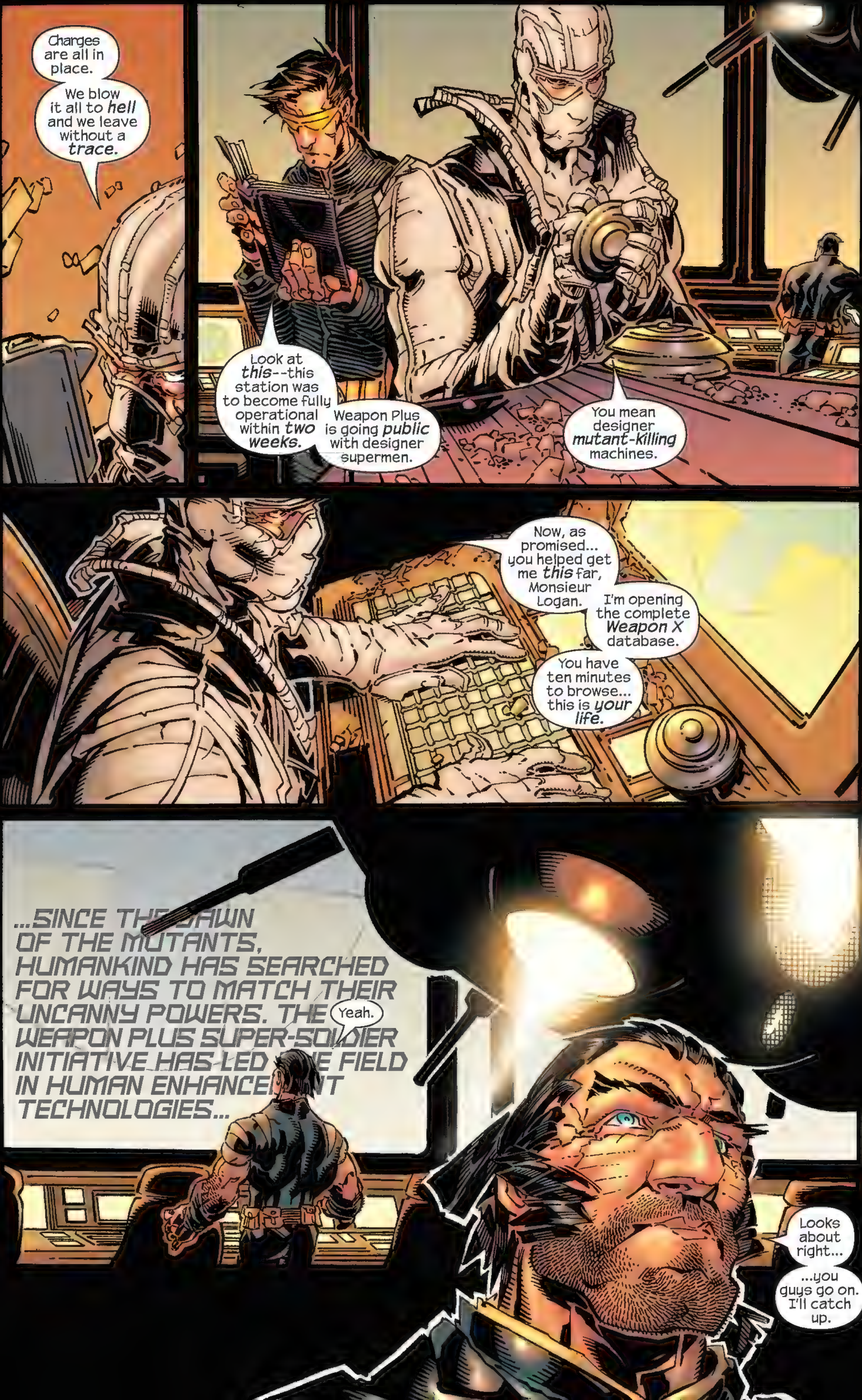
Too much *everything.*

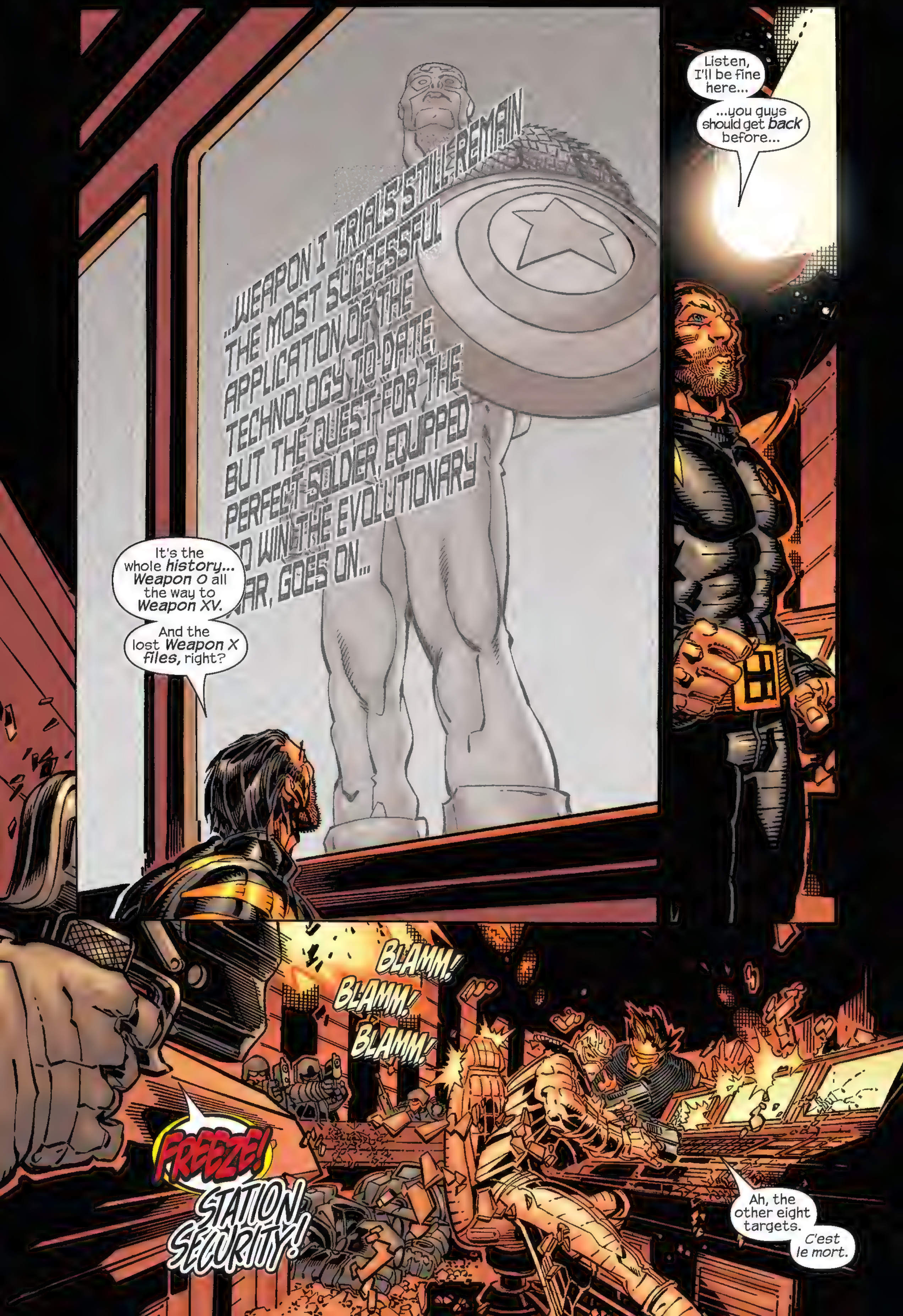

All of this is *mine.*
But it's all too much.
I wish someone would just tell me what to *do.*

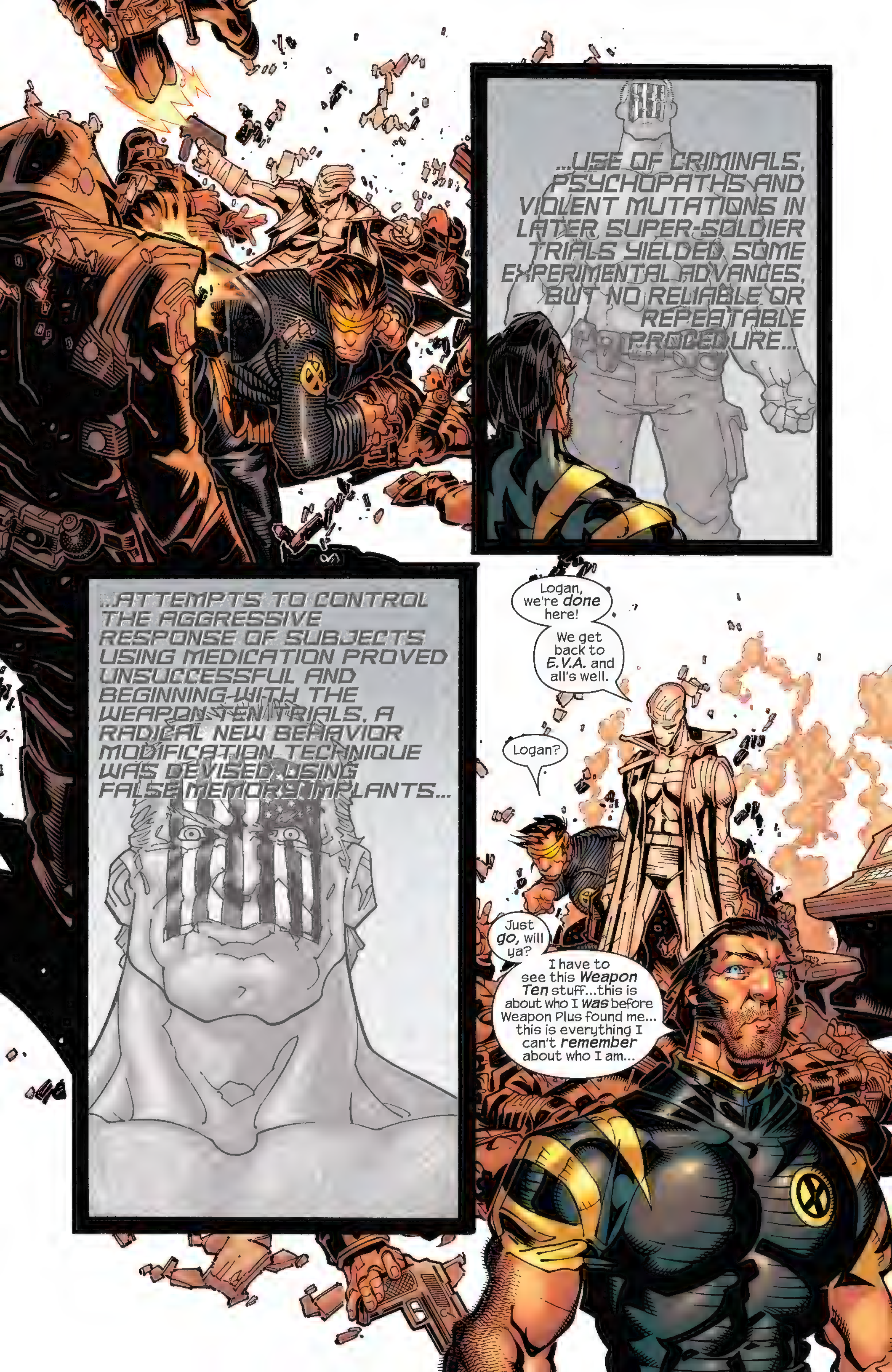

Inside...
...a second World.
It's on its way in--exactly as planned, Doctor.
Weapon Fifteen! Welcome home, son!
It's inside now, sir.
Can we evacuate?
Oh, don't worry about Fifteen...he's just a little confused. War trauma can do that.
Mutants obliterated The World colony where he was born and raised. Hellish business.
But don't you worry...you'll get your revenge soon enough, Fifteen.
This is the mansion we have prepared for you and your kind--Super-sapiens, we call you.
Part-man, part-machine, you were made to serve as the protectors of humankind against the menace of mutations.
You're part of a biological arms race.
You remember your primary function now, don't you, Fifteen?
Destroy the mutants?

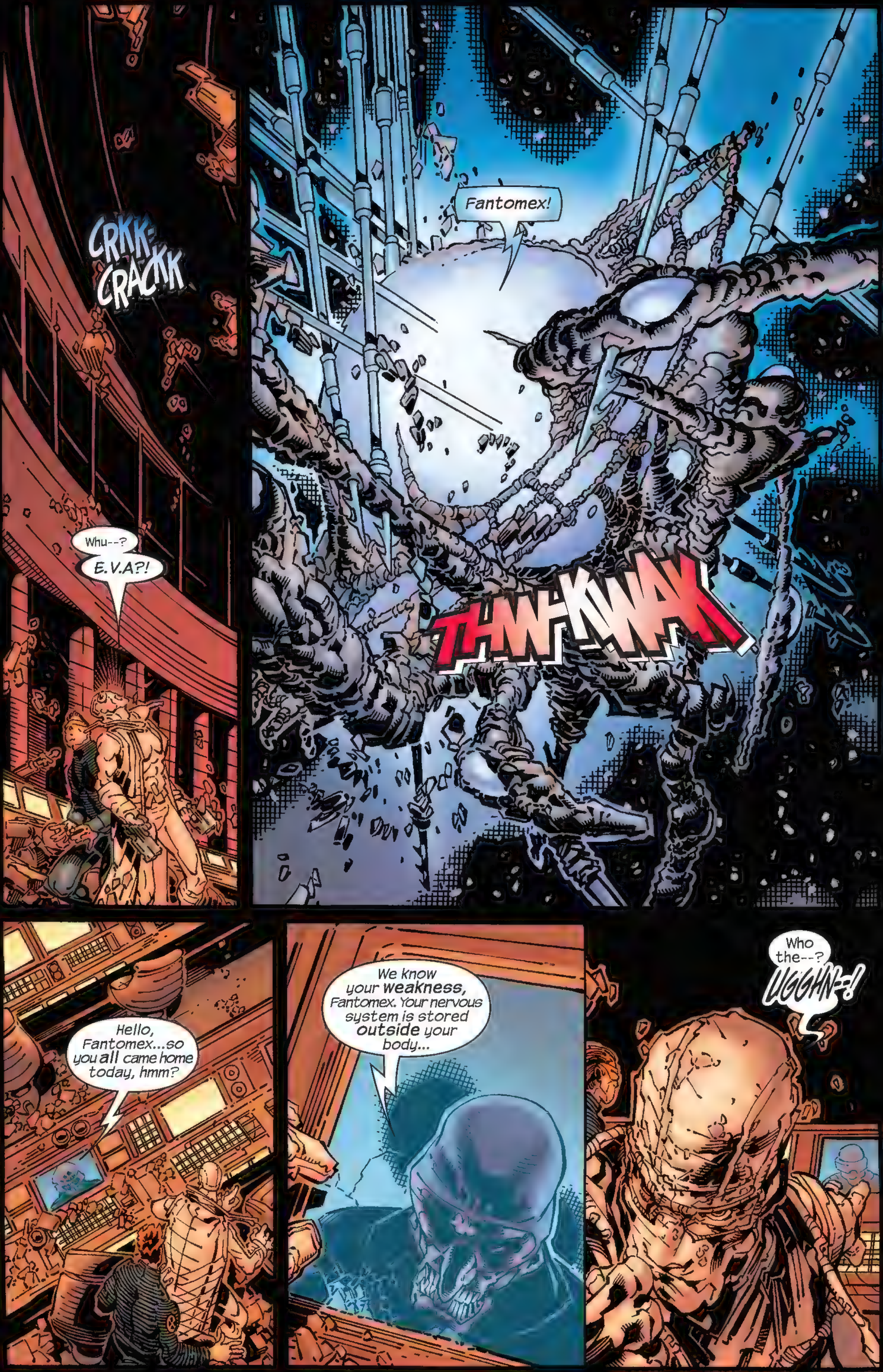

OUTSIDE...
The space station is still under construction and operating on ten percent power... defenses minimal...
...the door is open, Fantomex.
Thank you, E.V.A.
Shall we complete our campaign of righteous destruction, gentlemen?
Why didn't it kill me, Fantomex?
Weapon XV... it was like...it was like running a fight program... like pro-wrestling...
You're complaining, Monsieur Summers?
I always wondered what you got up to outside of X-Men hours, Logan...now I know.
Oh, and X-jackets off. The Professor wouldn't want to be associated with vandalism on this scale.
Whatever.

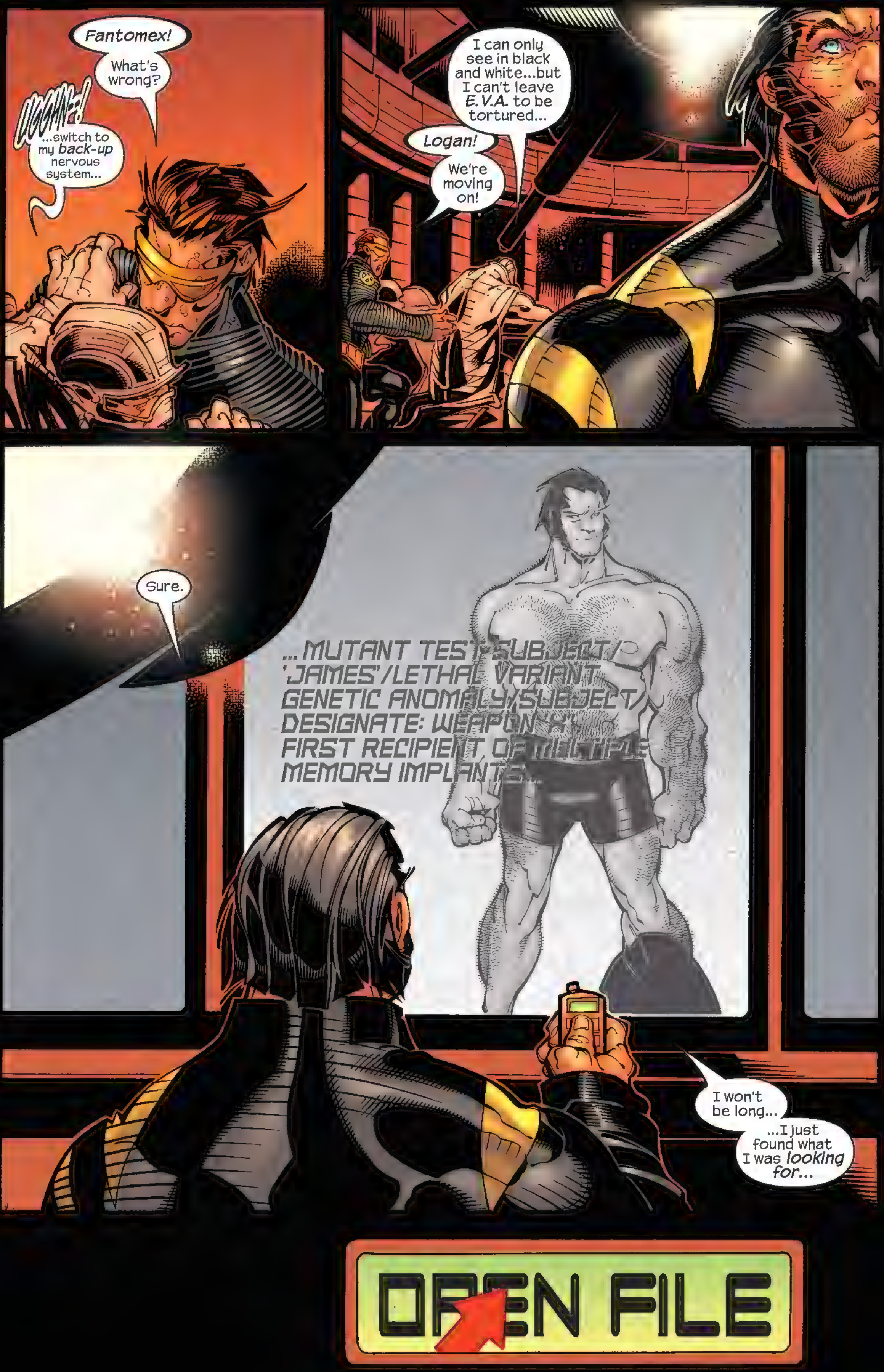

Stay back, boys-- *E.V.A.* senses fifteen armed targets.
You seem pretty restrained, Logan.
The smell of blood around that lunatic is driving me half-*crazy*, Summers-- but *somebody's* gotta watch your back!
Skeleton staff.
Get
it?

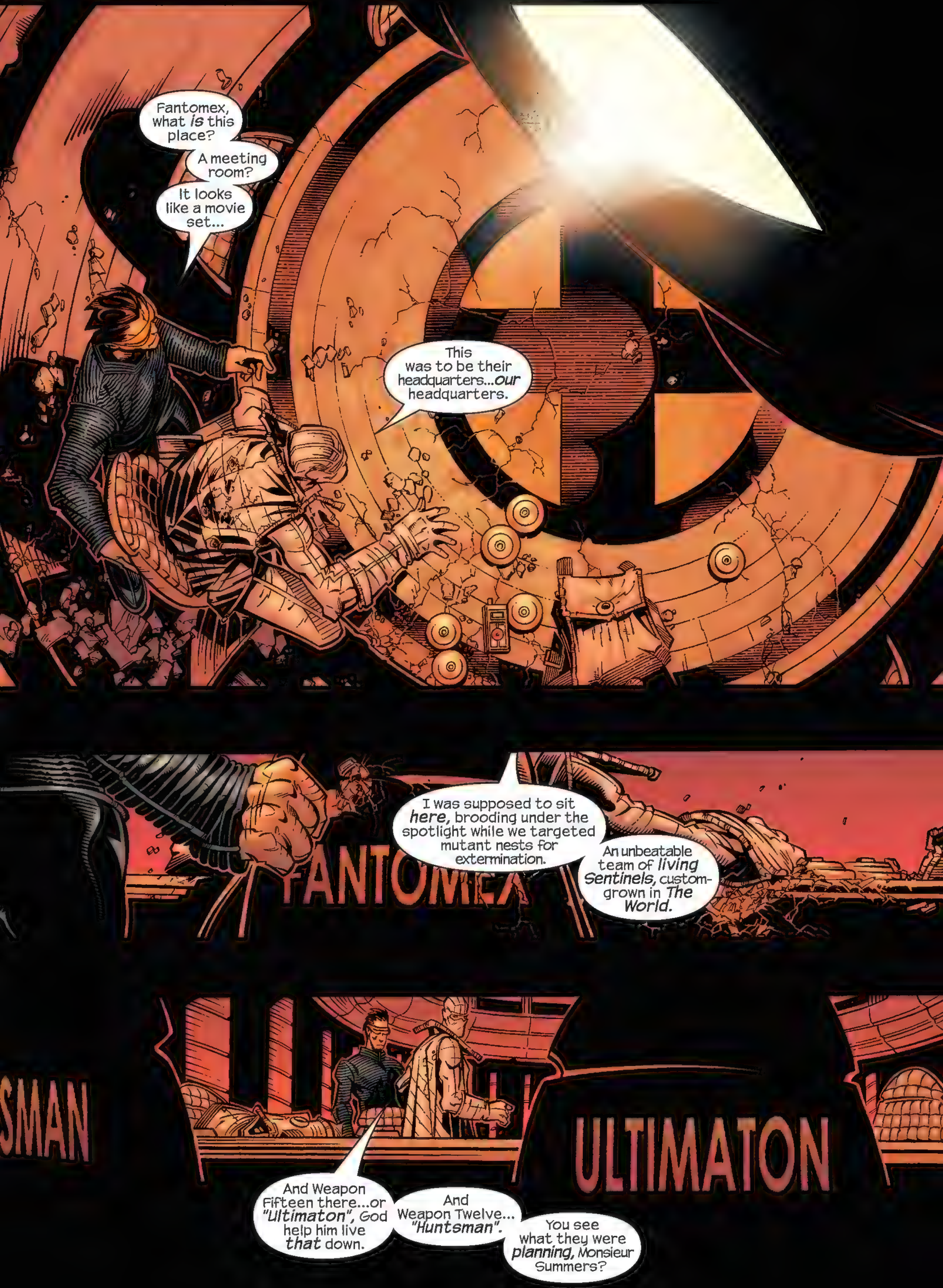

Charges are all in place.
We blow it all to *hell* and we leave without a *trace.*
Look at *this*--this station was to become fully operational within *two weeks.*
Weapon Plus is going *public* with designer supermen.
You mean designer *mutant-killing* machines.
Now, as promised... you helped get me *this* far, Monsieur Logan.
I'm opening the complete *Weapon X* database.
You have ten minutes to browse... this is *your life.*
...SINCE THE DAWN OF THE MUTANTS, HUMANKIND HAS SEARCHED FOR WAYS TO MATCH THEIR UNCANNY POWERS. THE WEAPON PLUS SUPER-SOLDIER INITIATIVE HAS LED THE FIELD IN HUMAN ENHANCEMENT TECHNOLOGIES...
Yeah.
Looks about right...
...you guys go on. I'll catch up.

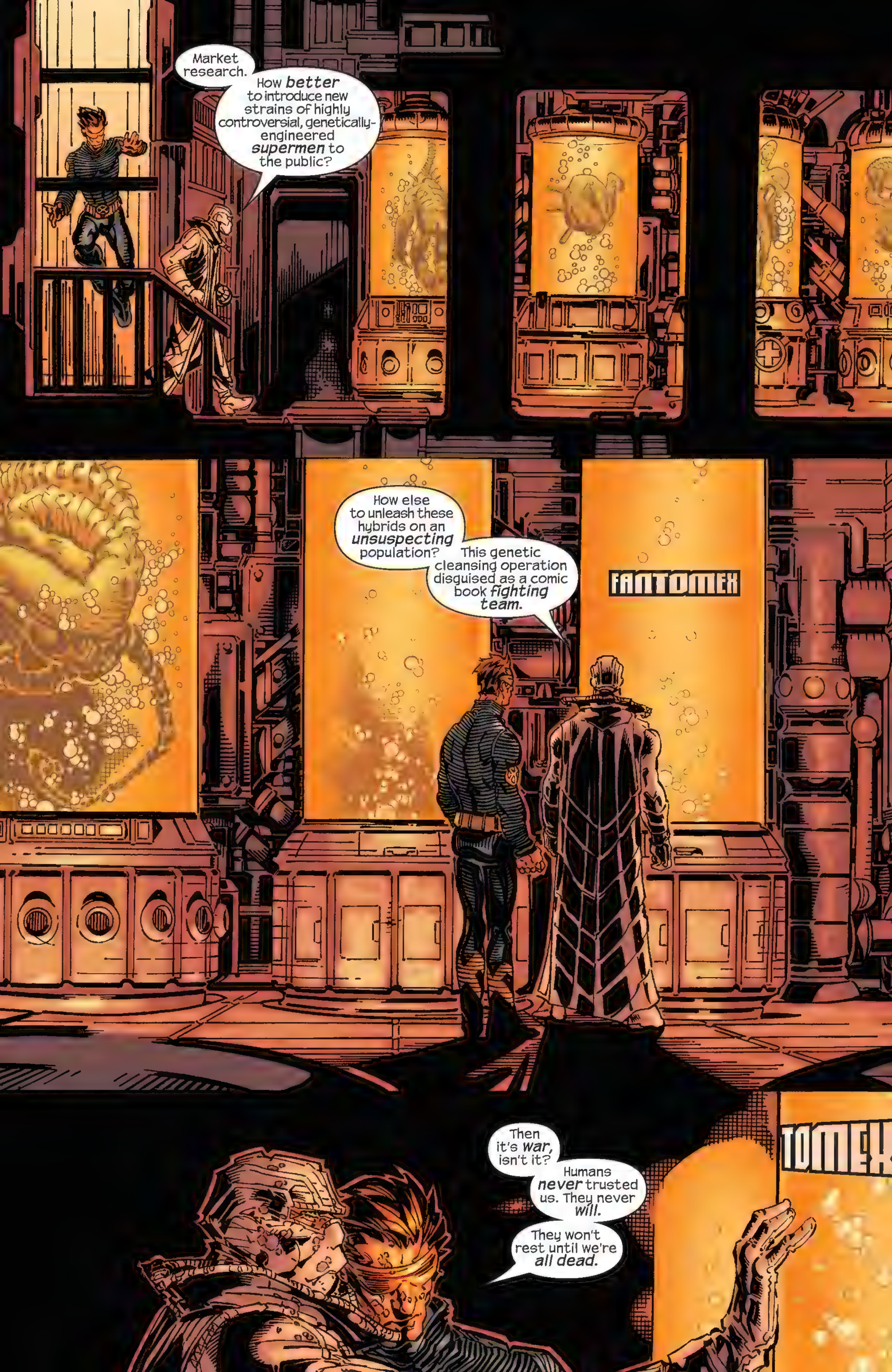

...WEAPON I TRIALS STILL REMAIN THE MOST SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION OF THE TECHNOLOGY TO DATE, BUT THE QUEST FOR THE PERFECT SOLDIER, EQUIPPED TO WIN THE EVOLUTIONARY WAR, GOES ON...
It's the whole *history...* *Weapon 0* all the way to *Weapon XV.*
And the lost *Weapon X files,* right?
Listen, I'll be fine here...
...you guys should get *back* before...
BLAMM!
BLAMM!
BLAMM!
FREEZE!
STATION SECURITY!
Ah, the other eight targets.
C'est le mort.

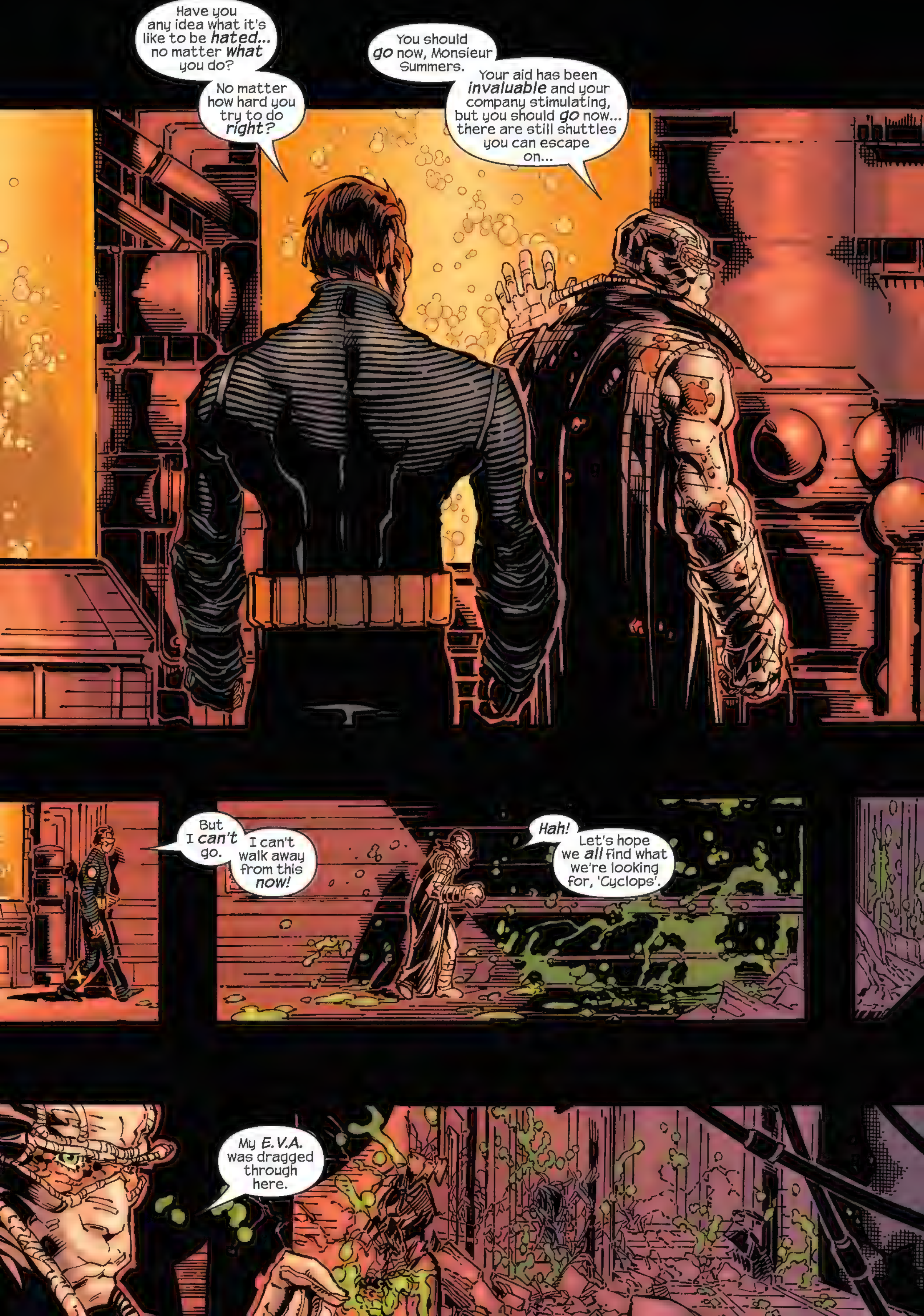

...USE OF CRIMINALS, PSYCHOPATHS AND VIOLENT MUTATIONS IN LATER SUPER-SOLDIER TRIALS YIELDED SOME EXPERIMENTAL ADVANCES, BUT NO RELIABLE OR REPEATABLE PROCEDURE...
...ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL THE AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE OF SUBJECTS USING MEDICATION PROVED UNSUCCESSFUL AND BEGINNING WITH THE WEAPON TEN TRIALS, A RADICAL NEW BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUE WAS DEVISED USING FALSE MEMORY IMPLANTS...
Logan, we're *done* here!
We get back to *E.V.A.* and all's well.
Logan?
Just *go*, will ya?
I have to see this *Weapon Ten* stuff...this is about who I *was* before Weapon Plus found me... this is everything I can't *remember* about who I am...

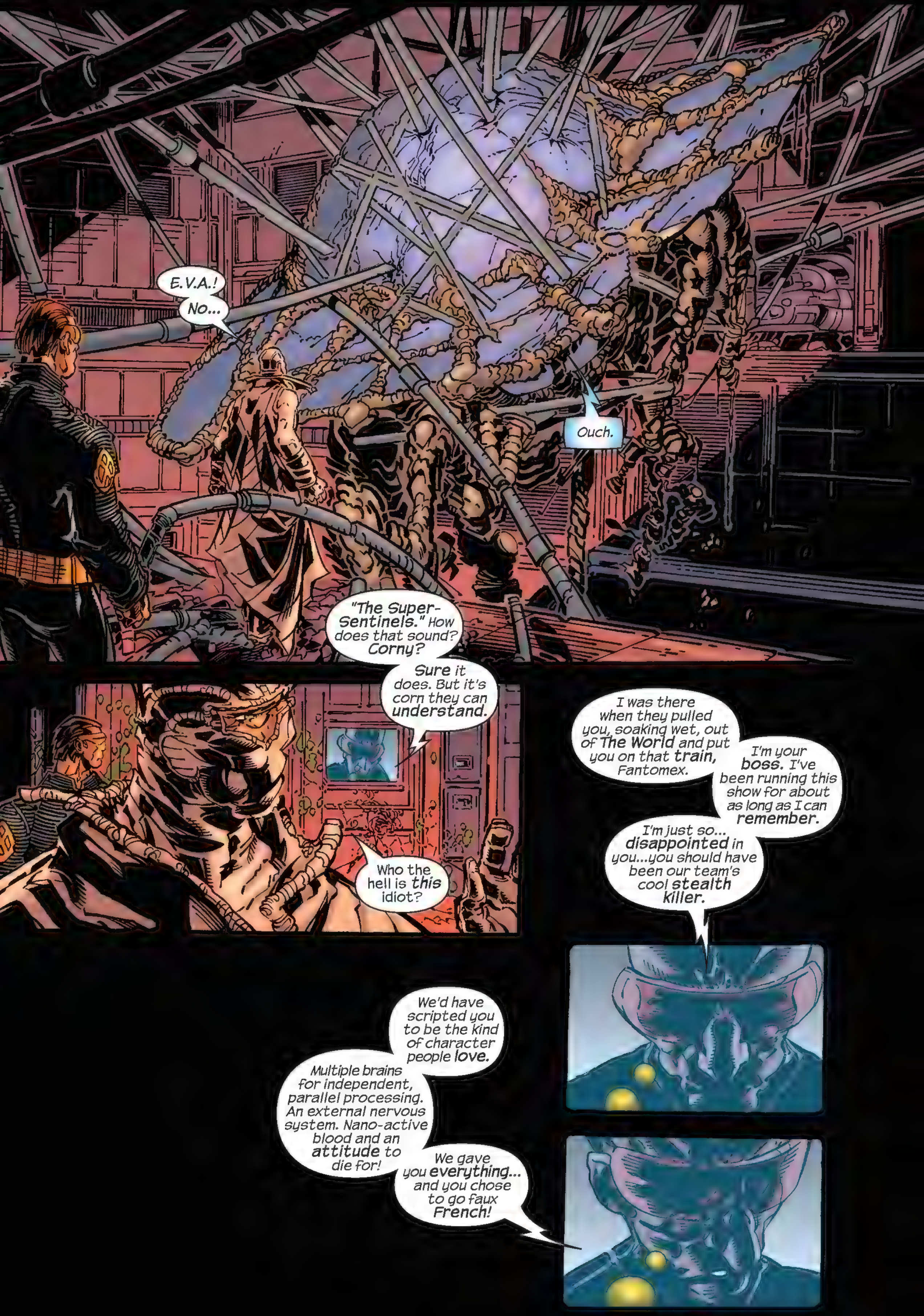

CRKK-CRACKK
Whu--?
E.V.A?!
Fantomex!
THWKWAK
Hello, Fantomex...so you **all** came home today, hmm?
We know your **weakness**, Fantomex. Your nervous system is stored **outside** your body...
Who the--?
UGGHN--!

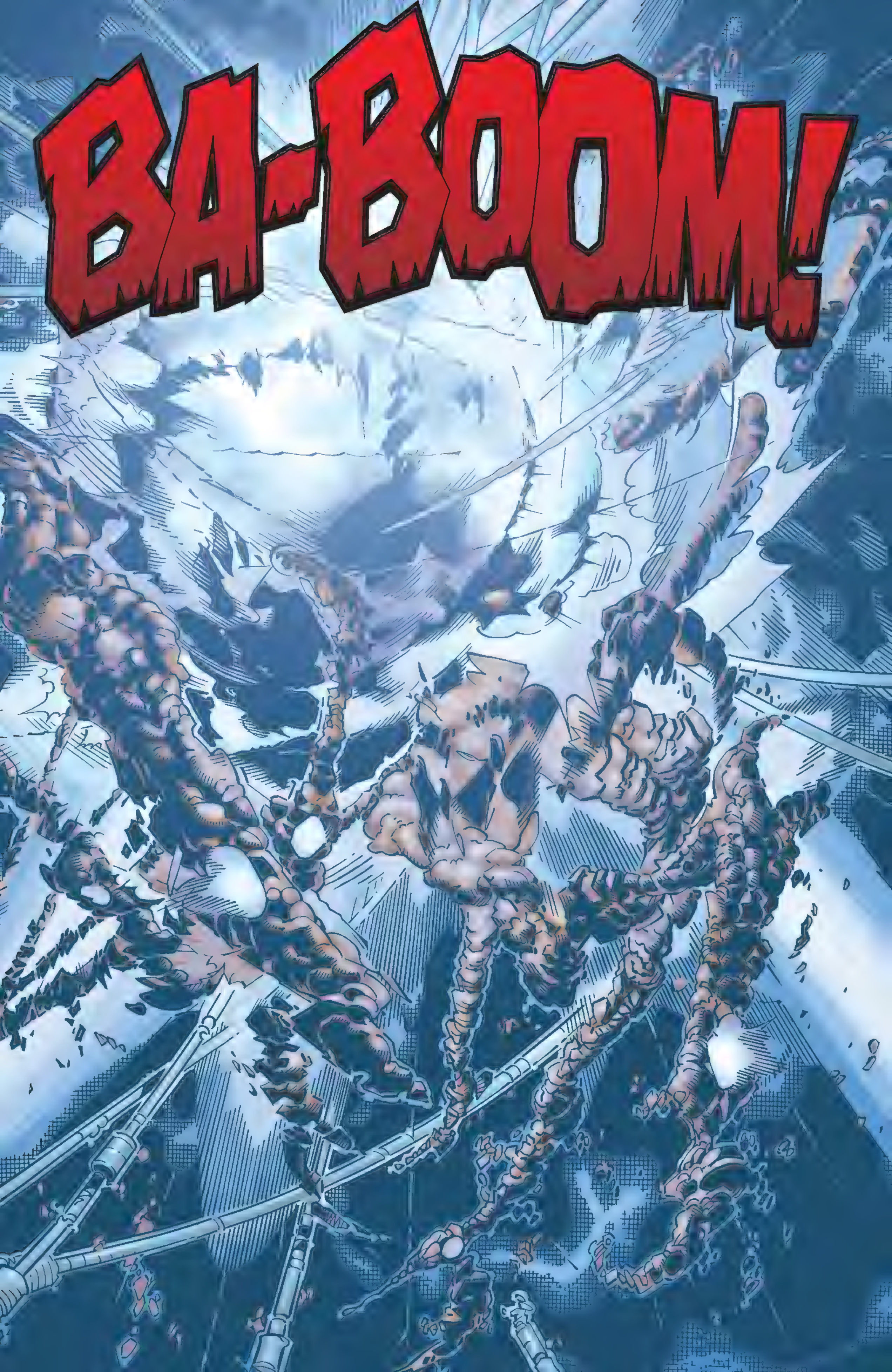

Fantomex!
What's wrong?
UUGHH!
...switch to my *back-up* nervous system...
I can only see in black and white...but I can't leave *E.V.A.* to be tortured...
Logan!
We're moving on!
Sure.
...MUTANT TEST SUBJECT/ 'JAMES'/LETHAL VARIANT GENETIC ANOMALY/SUBJECT DESIGNATE: WEAPON 'X'/ FIRST RECIPIENT OF MULTIPLE MEMORY IMPLANTS...
I won't be long...
...I just found what I was *looking for*...
OPEN FILE

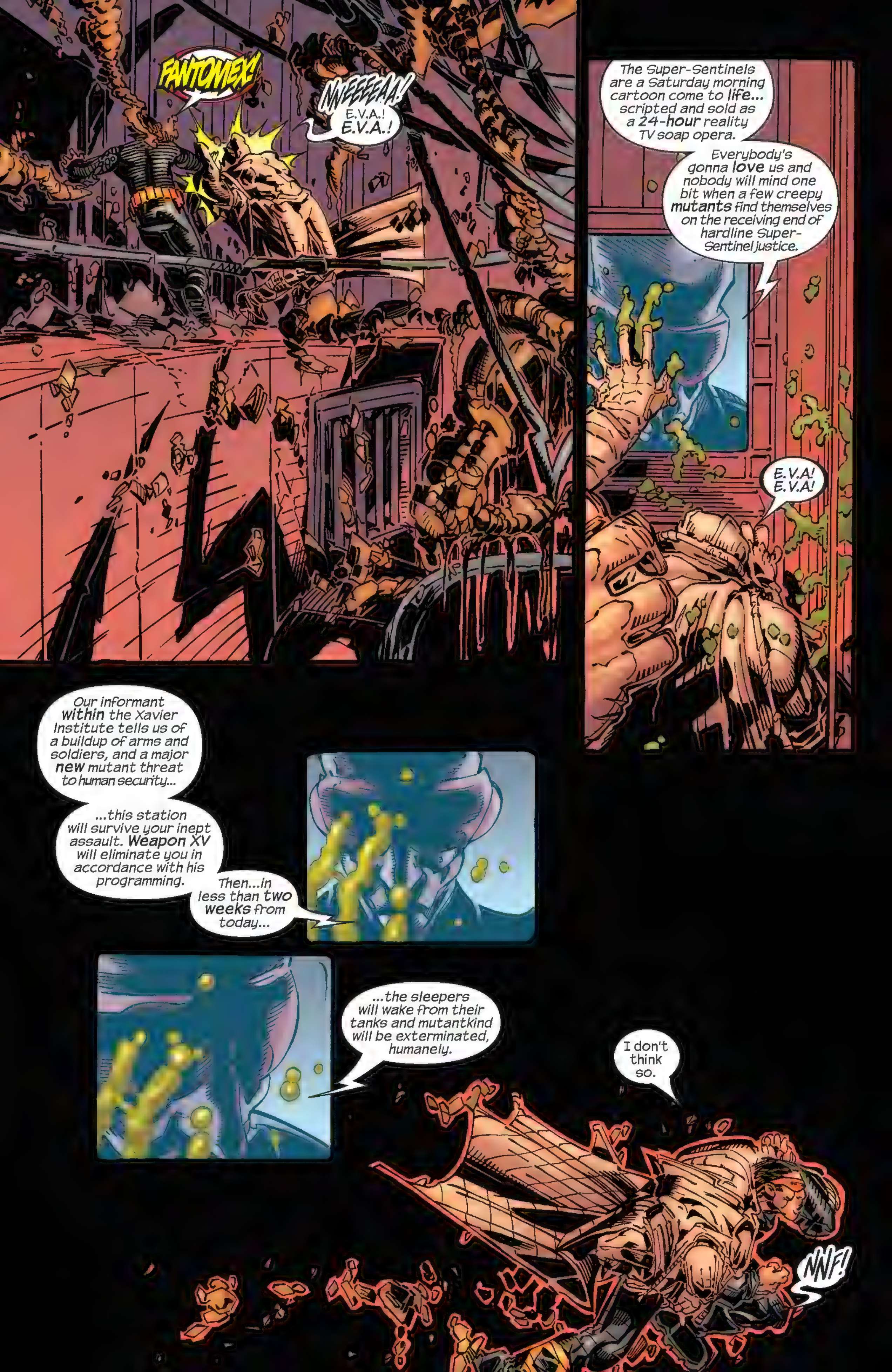

Fantomex, what *is* this place?
A meeting room?
It looks like a movie set...
This was to be their headquarters...*our* headquarters.
FANTOMEX
I was supposed to sit *here*, brooding under the spotlight while we targeted mutant nests for extermination.
An unbeatable team of *living Sentinels*, custom-grown in *The World.*
SMAN
ULTIMATON
And Weapon Fifteen there...or *"Ultimaton"*, God help him live *that* down.
And Weapon Twelve... *"Huntsman".*
You see what they were *planning*, Monsieur Summers?

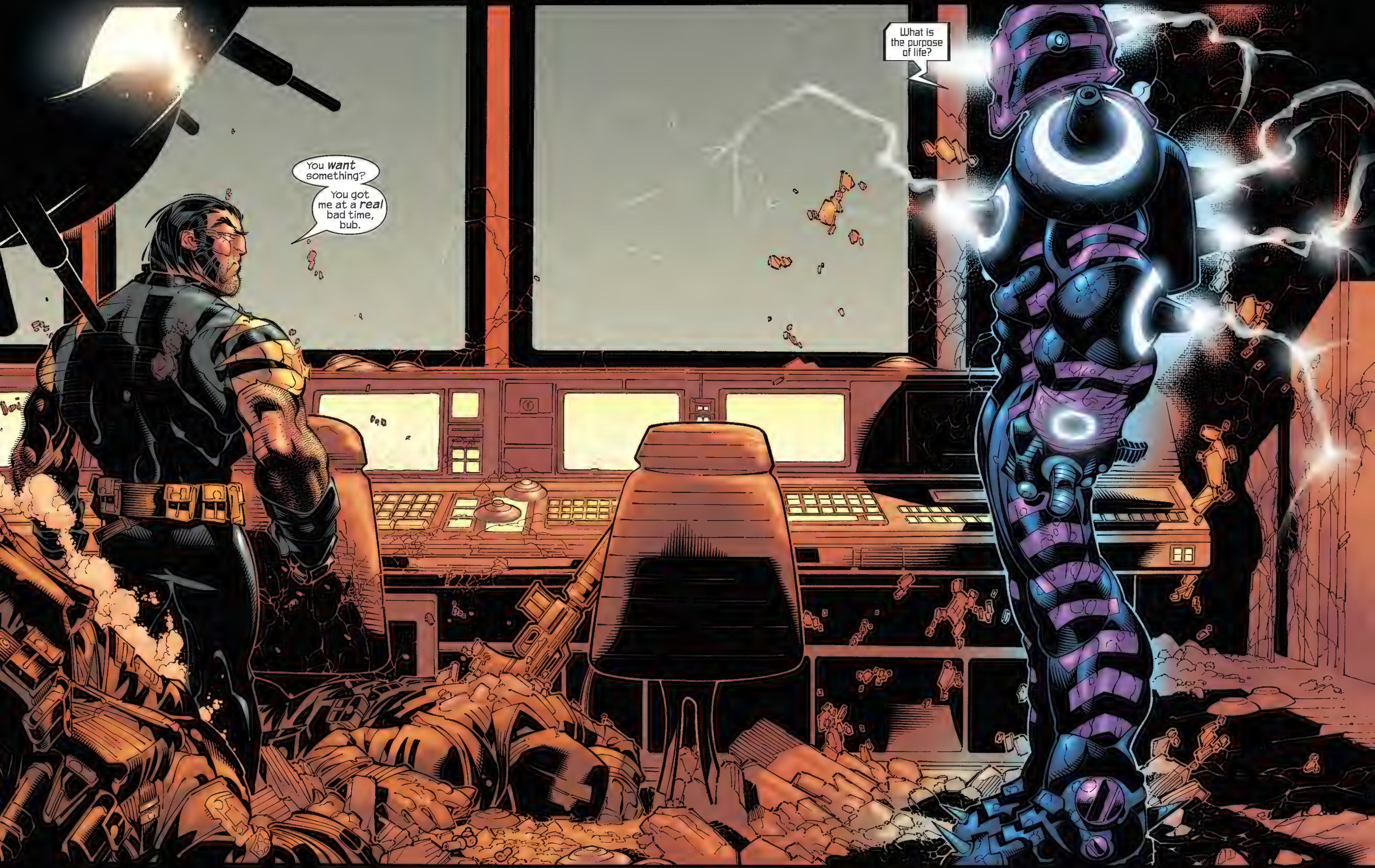

Market research.
How better to introduce new strains of highly controversial, genetically-engineered supermen to the public?
How else to unleash these hybrids on an unsuspecting population?
This genetic cleansing operation disguised as a comic book fighting team.
FANTOMEX
Then it's war, isn't it?
Humans never trusted us. They never will.
They won't rest until we're all dead.
TOMEX

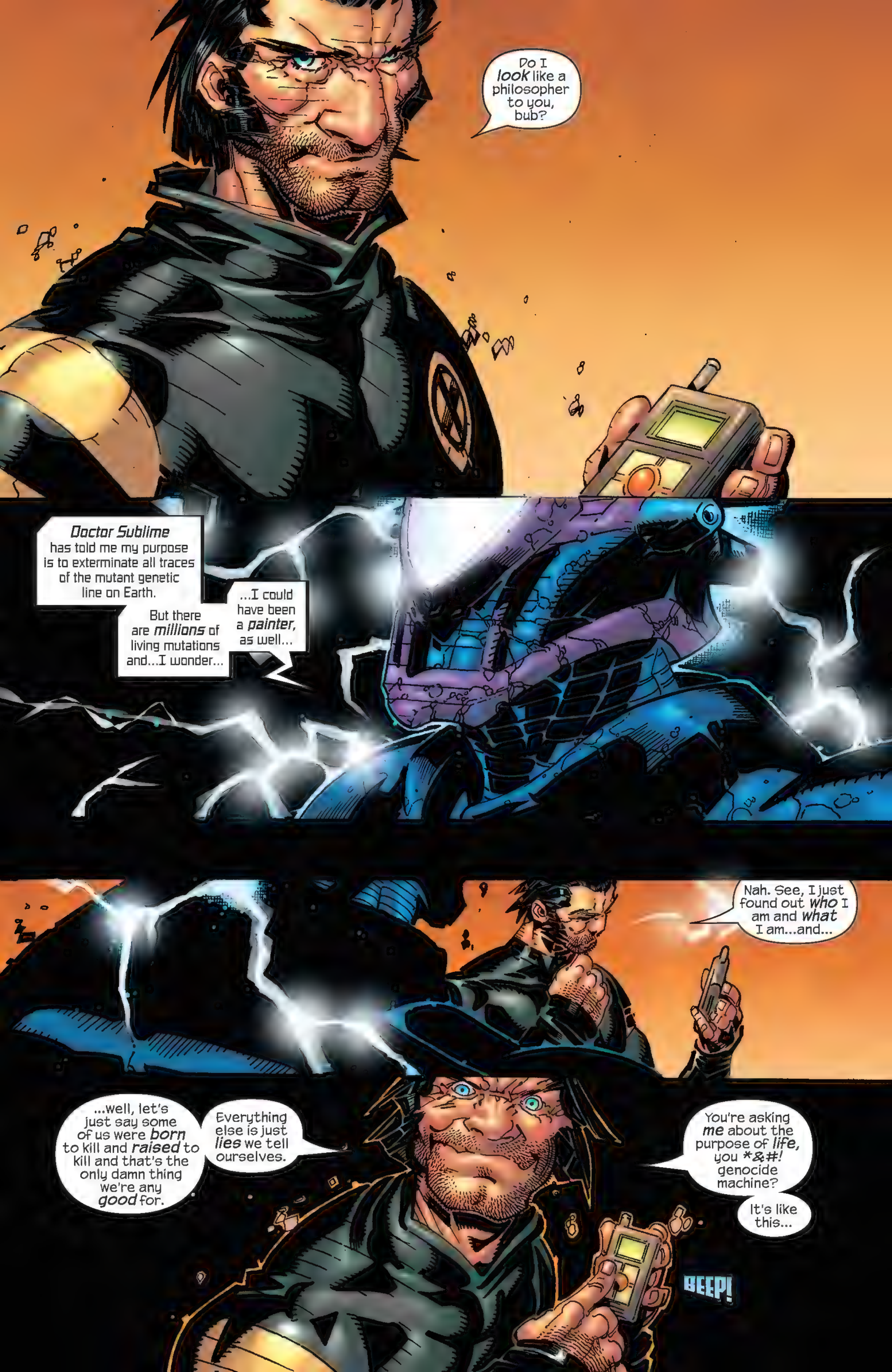

Have you any idea what it's like to be *hated*... no matter *what* you do?
No matter how hard you try to do *right?*
You should *go* now, Monsieur Summers.
Your aid has been *invaluable* and your company stimulating, but you should *go* now... there are still shuttles you can escape on...
But I *can't* go.
I can't walk away from this *now!*
Hah!
Let's hope we *all* find what we're looking for, 'Cyclops'.
My *E.V.A.* was dragged through here.

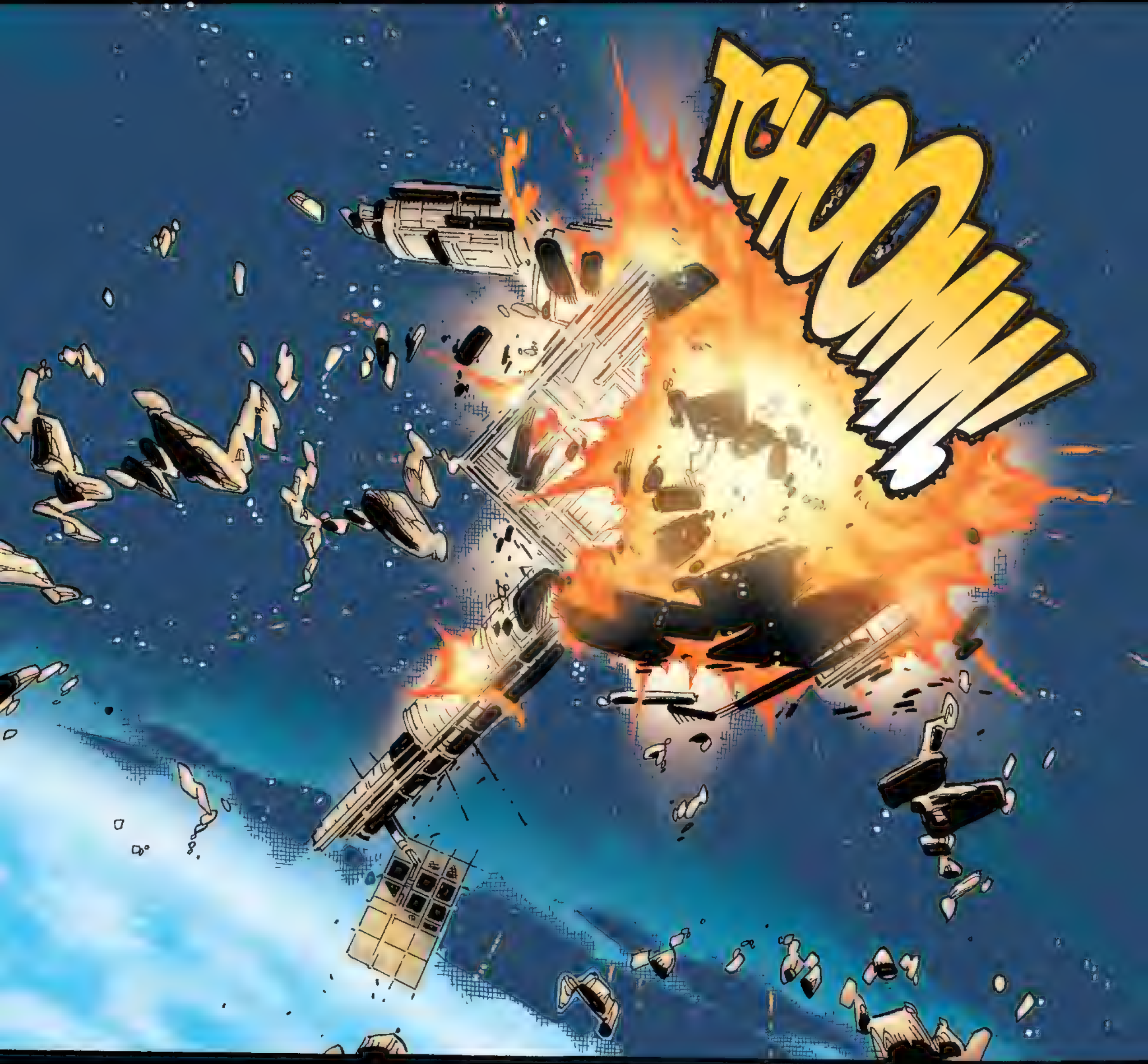

E.V.A.! No...
Ouch.
"The Super-Sentinels." How does that sound? Corny?
Sure it does. But it's corn they can understand.
Who the hell is this idiot?
I was there when they pulled you, soaking wet, out of The World and put you on that train, Fantomex.
I'm your boss. I've been running this show for about as long as I can remember.
I'm just so... disappointed in you...you should have been our team's cool stealth killer.
We'd have scripted you to be the kind of character people love.
Multiple brains for independent, parallel processing. An external nervous system. Nano-active blood and an attitude to die for!
We gave you everything... and you chose to go faux French!

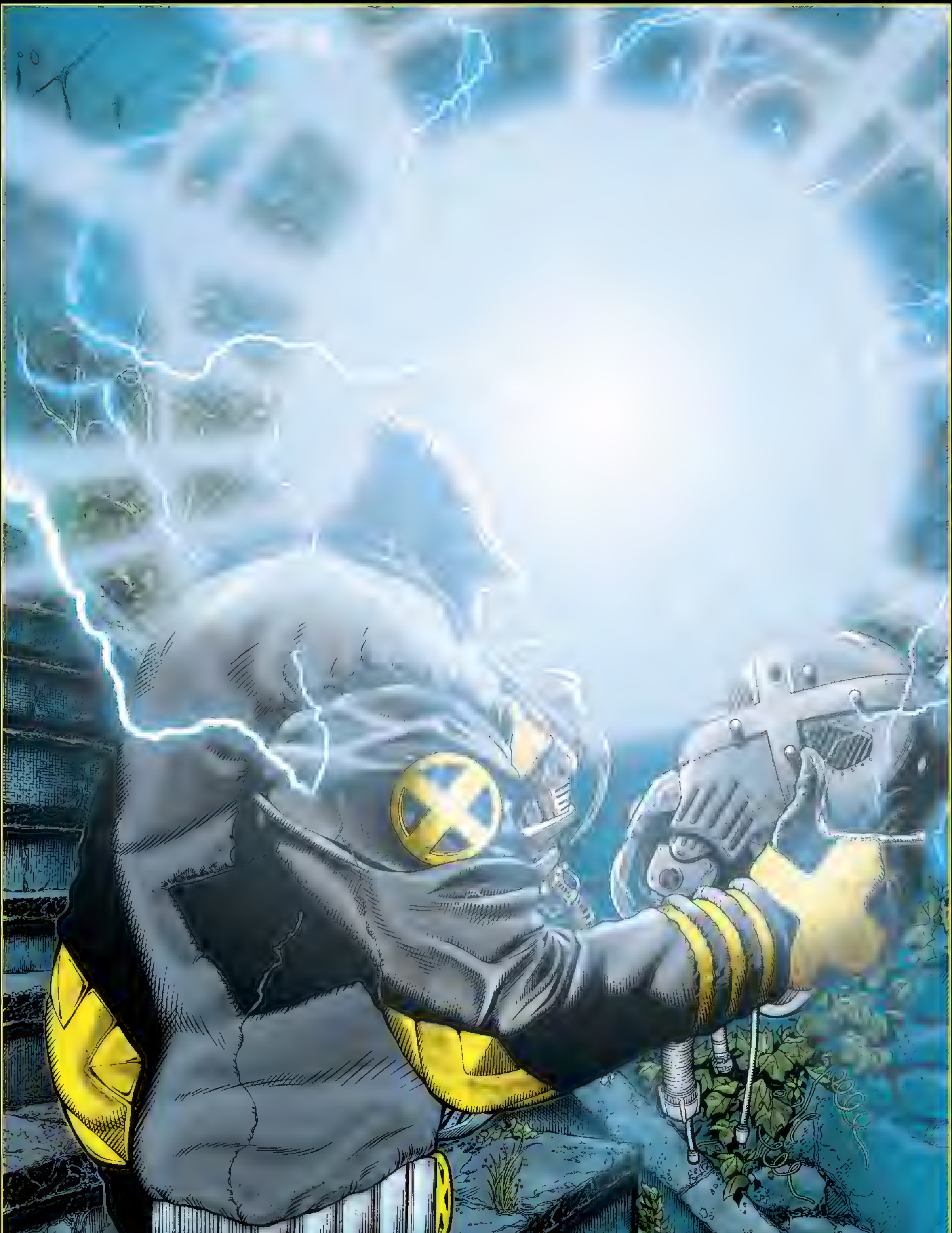

BA-BOOM!


FANTOMEX!
NNEEEEAA! E.V.A.! E.V.A.!
The Super-Sentinels are a Saturday morning cartoon come to life... scripted and sold as a 24-hour reality TV soap opera.
Everybody's gonna love us and nobody will mind one bit when a few creepy mutants find themselves on the receiving end of hardline Super-Sentinel justice.
E.V.A! E.V.A!
Our informant within the Xavier Institute tells us of a buildup of arms and soldiers, and a major new mutant threat to human security...
...this station will survive your inept assault. Weapon XV will eliminate you in accordance with his programming.
Then...in less than two weeks from today...
...the sleepers will wake from their tanks and mutantkind will be exterminated, humanely.
I don't think so.
NNF!

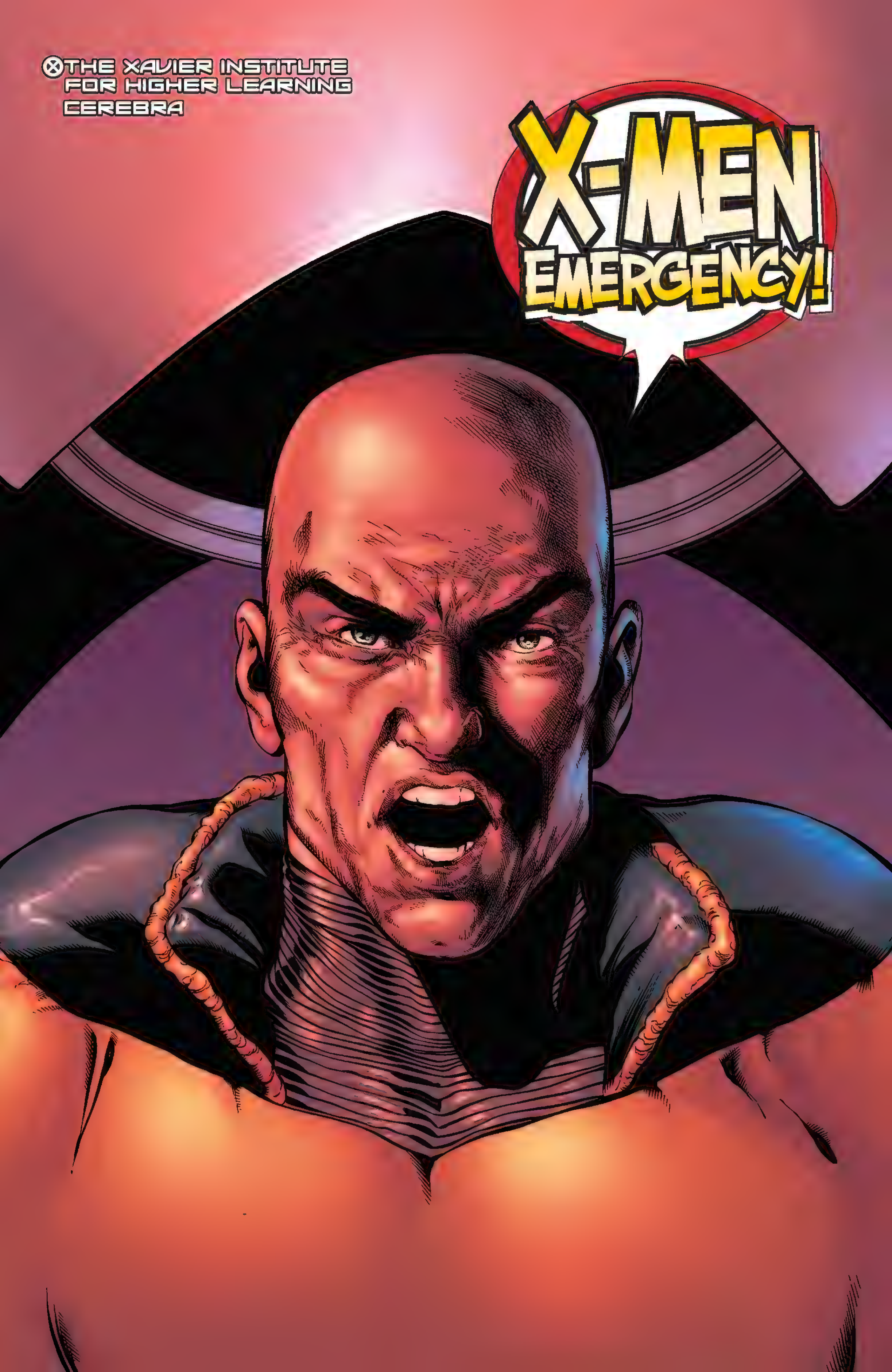

You *want* something?
You got me at a *real* bad time, bub.
What is the purpose of life?

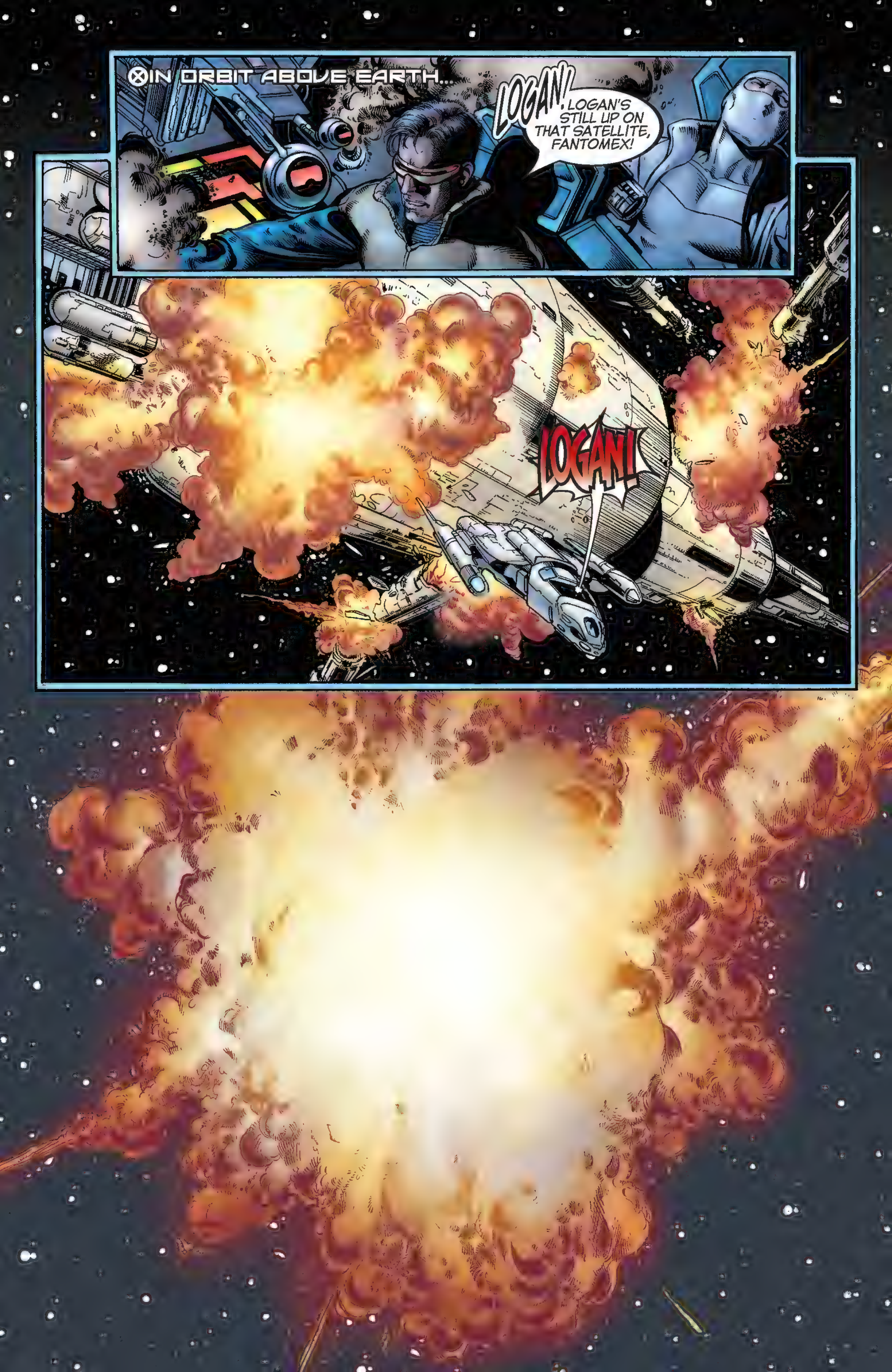

Do I *look* like a philosopher to you, bub?
Doctor Sublime has told me my purpose is to exterminate all traces of the mutant genetic line on Earth.
But there are *millions* of living mutations and...I wonder...
...I could have been a *painter,* as well...
Nah. See, I just found out *who* I am and *what* I am...and...
...well, let's just say some of us were *born* to kill and *raised* to kill and that's the only damn thing we're any *good* for.
Everything else is just *lies* we tell ourselves.
You're asking *me* about the purpose of *life,* you *&#! genocide machine?
It's like this...
BEEP!

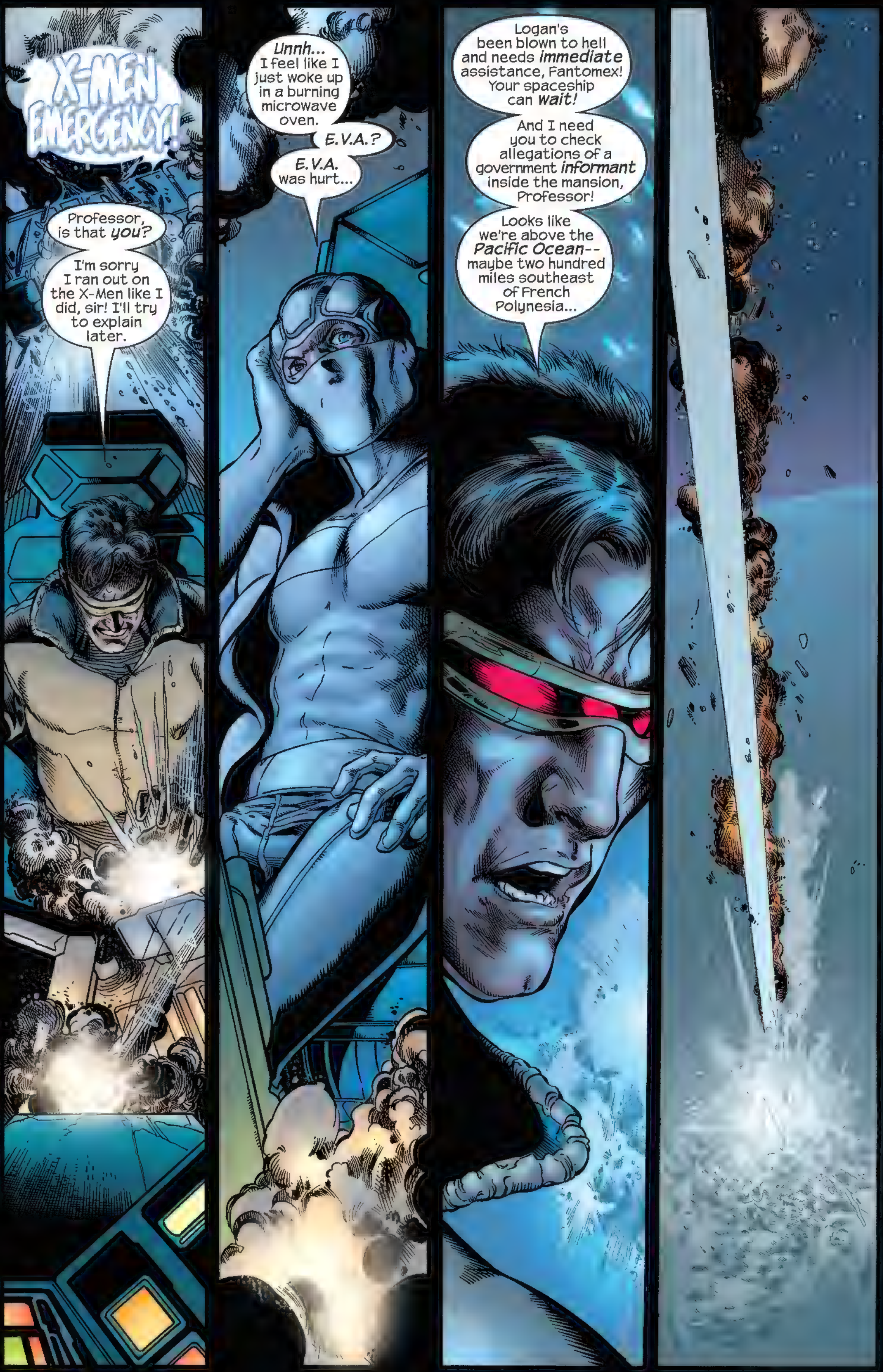

TCHOOMM!

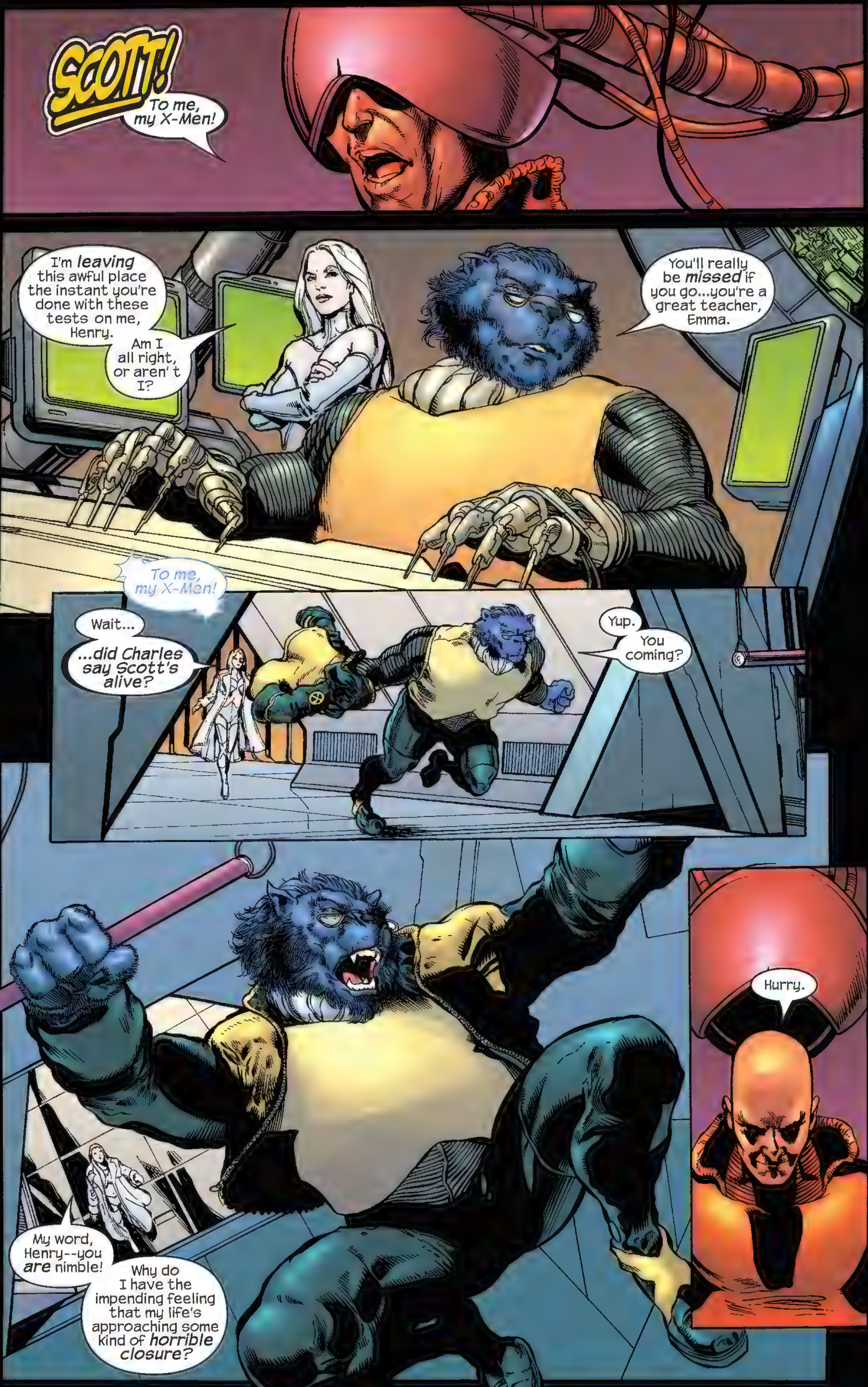

ETHAN 01
TOWNSEND
NOSE

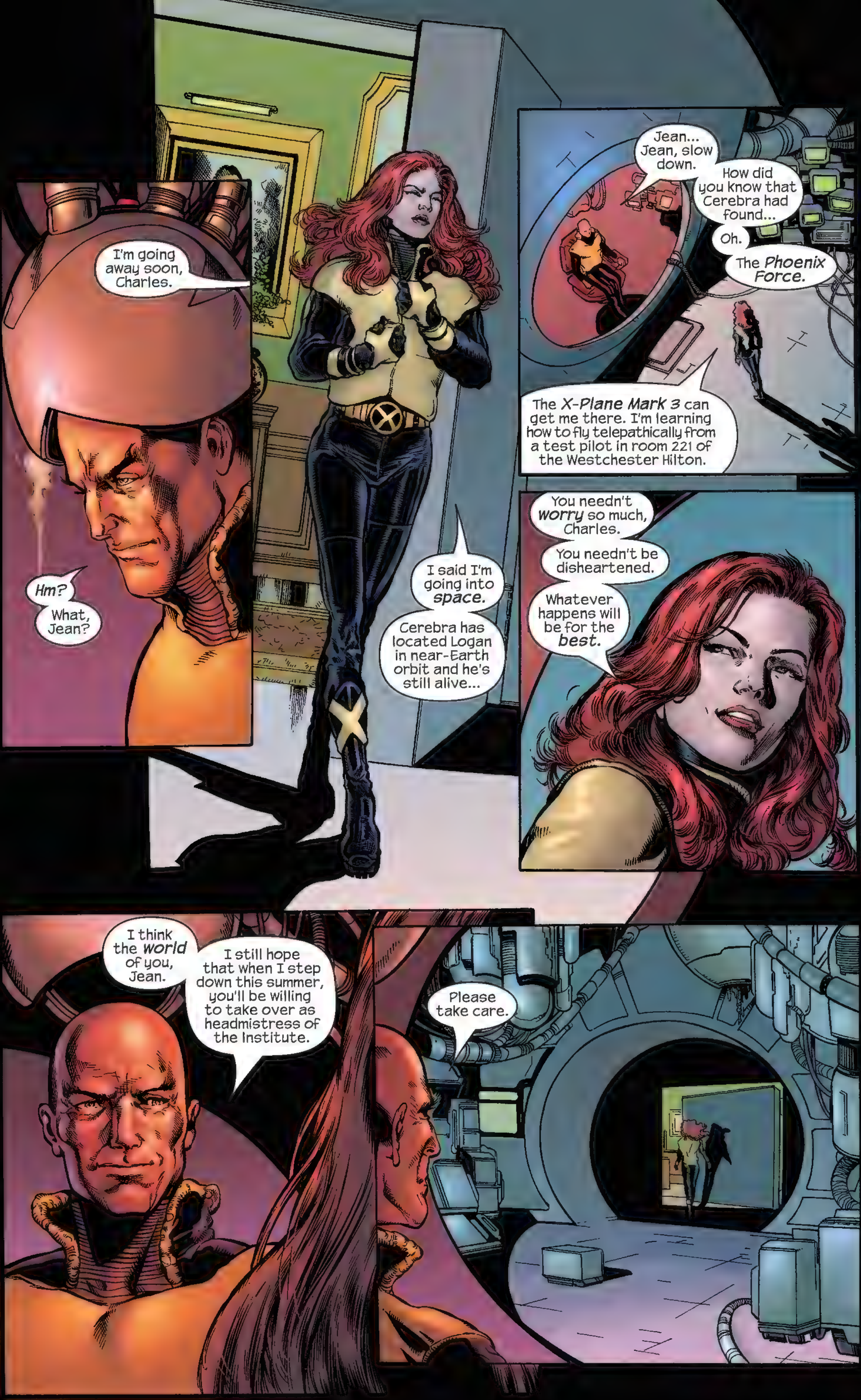
NEW X-MEN #146
"PLANET X PART ONE"

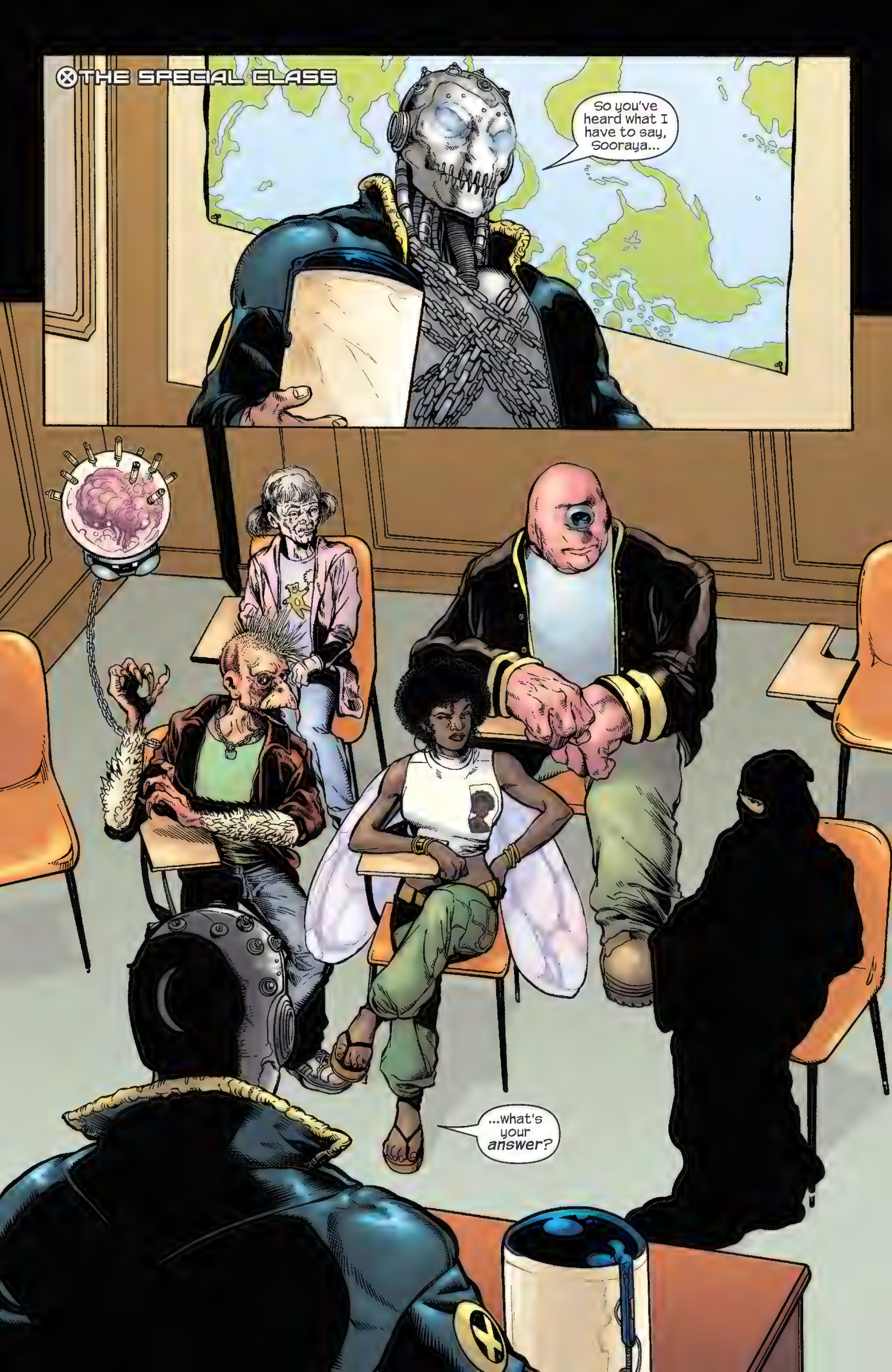

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER LEARNING
CEREBRA
X-MEN EMERGENCY!

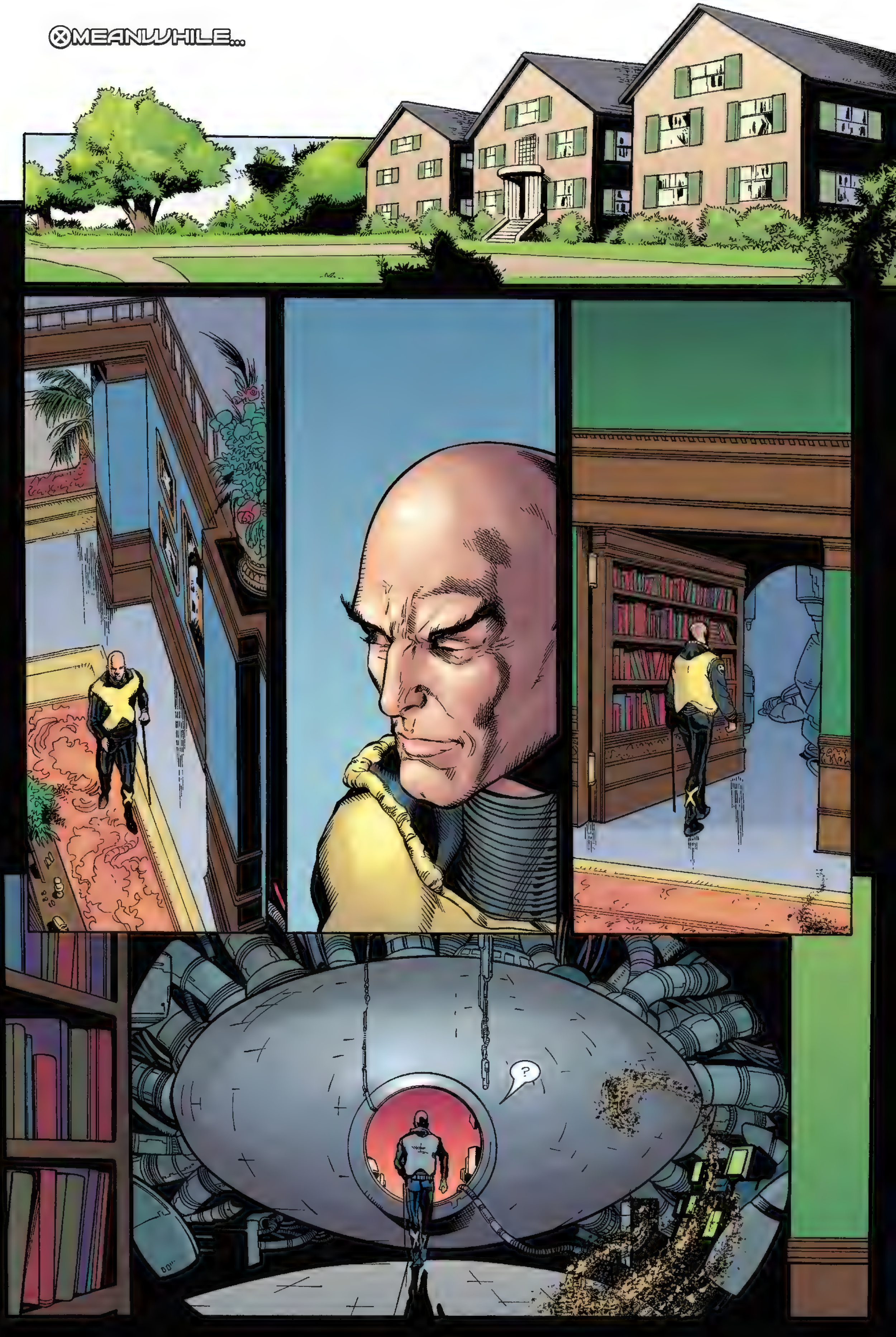

IN ORBIT ABOVE EARTH...
LOGAN!
LOGAN'S STILL UP ON THAT SATELLITE, FANTOMEX!
LOGAN!

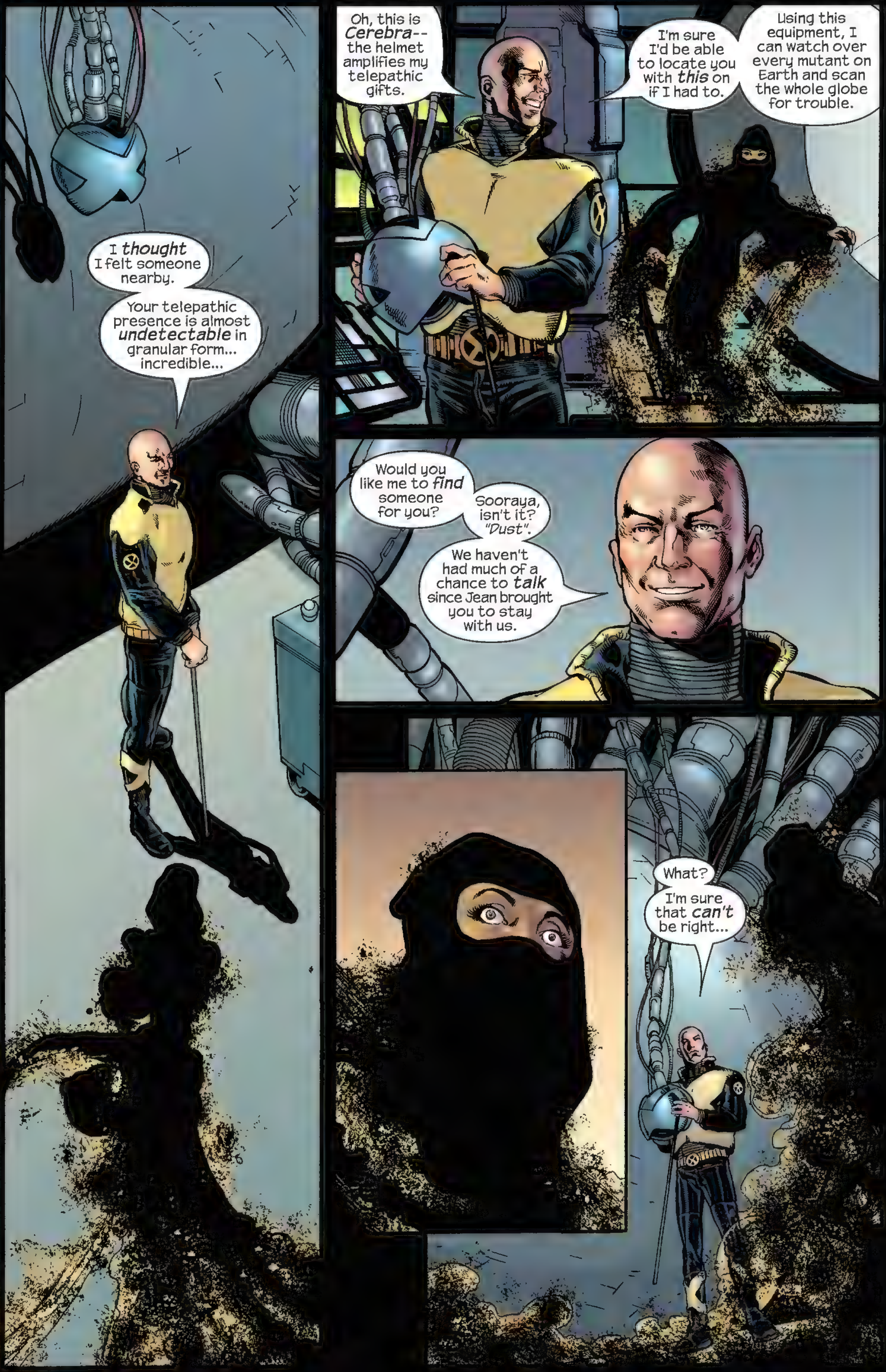

X-MEN EMERGENCY!
Professor, is that *you?*
I'm sorry I ran out on the X-Men like I did, sir! I'll try to explain later.
Unnh... I feel like I just woke up in a burning microwave oven.
E.V.A.?
E.V.A. was hurt...
Logan's been blown to hell and needs *immediate* assistance, Fantomex! Your spaceship can *wait!*
And I need you to check allegations of a government *informant* inside the mansion, Professor!
Looks like we're above the *Pacific Ocean*-- maybe two hundred miles southeast of French Polynesia...

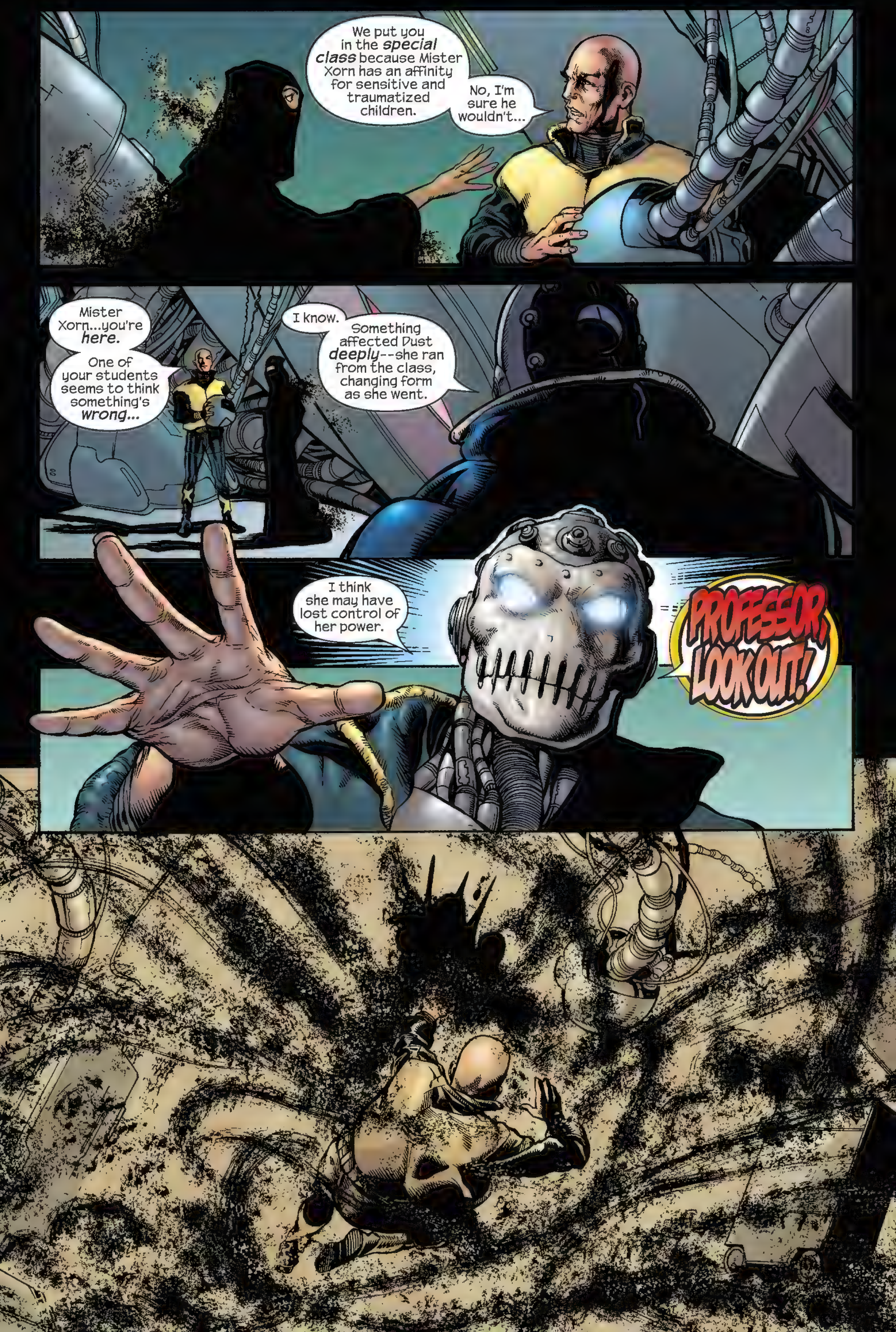

SCOTT!
To me, my X-Men!
I'm *leaving* this awful place the instant you're done with these tests on me, Henry.
Am I all right, or aren't I?
You'll really be *missed* if you go...you're a great teacher, Emma.
To me, my X-Men!
Wait...
...did Charles say Scott's alive?
Yup.
You coming?
Hurry.
My word, Henry--you *are* nimble!
Why do I have the impending feeling that my life's approaching some kind of *horrible closure?*

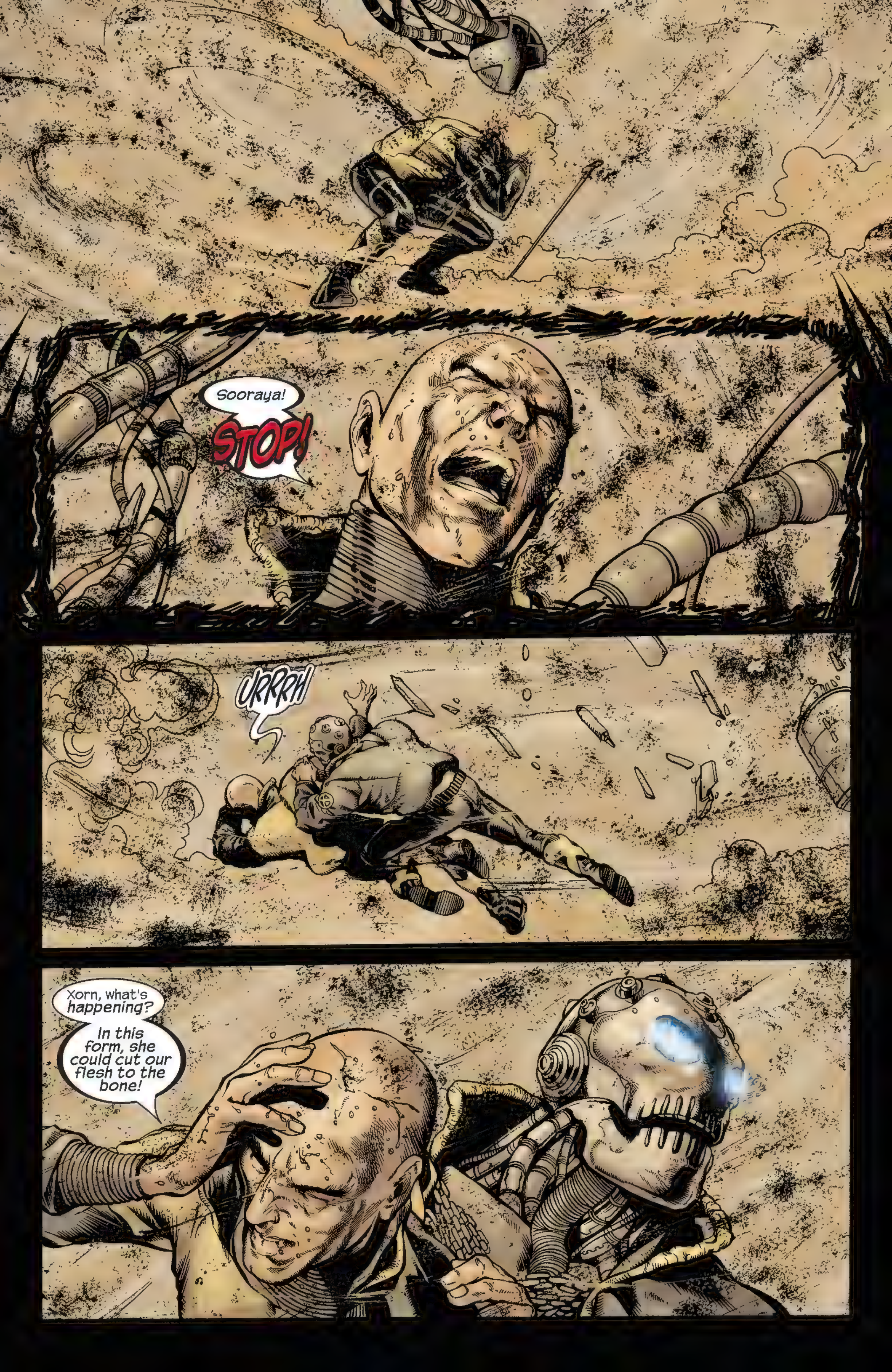

I'm going away soon, Charles.
Hm? What, Jean?
I said I'm going into *space.*
Cerebra has located Logan in near-Earth orbit and he's still alive...
Jean... Jean, slow down.
How did you know that Cerebra had found...
Oh.
The *Phoenix Force.*
The *X-Plane Mark 3* can get me there. I'm learning how to fly telepathically from a test pilot in room 221 of the Westchester Hilton.
You needn't *worry* so much, Charles.
You needn't be disheartened.
Whatever happens will be for the *best.*
I think the *world* of you, Jean.
I still hope that when I step down this summer, you'll be willing to take over as headmistress of the Institute.
Please take care.

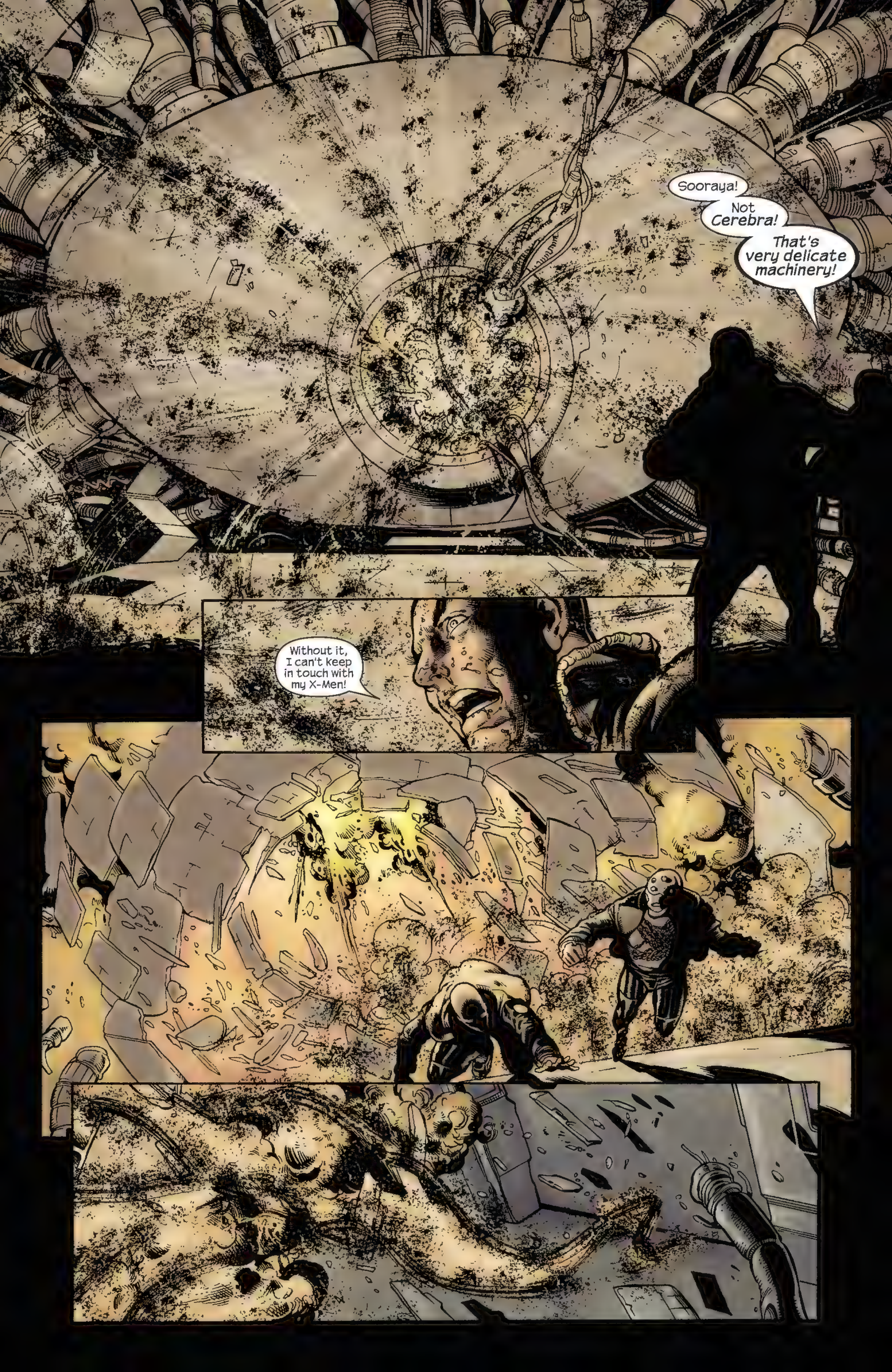

THE SPECIAL CLASS
So you've heard what I have to say, Sooraya...
...what's your *answer?*

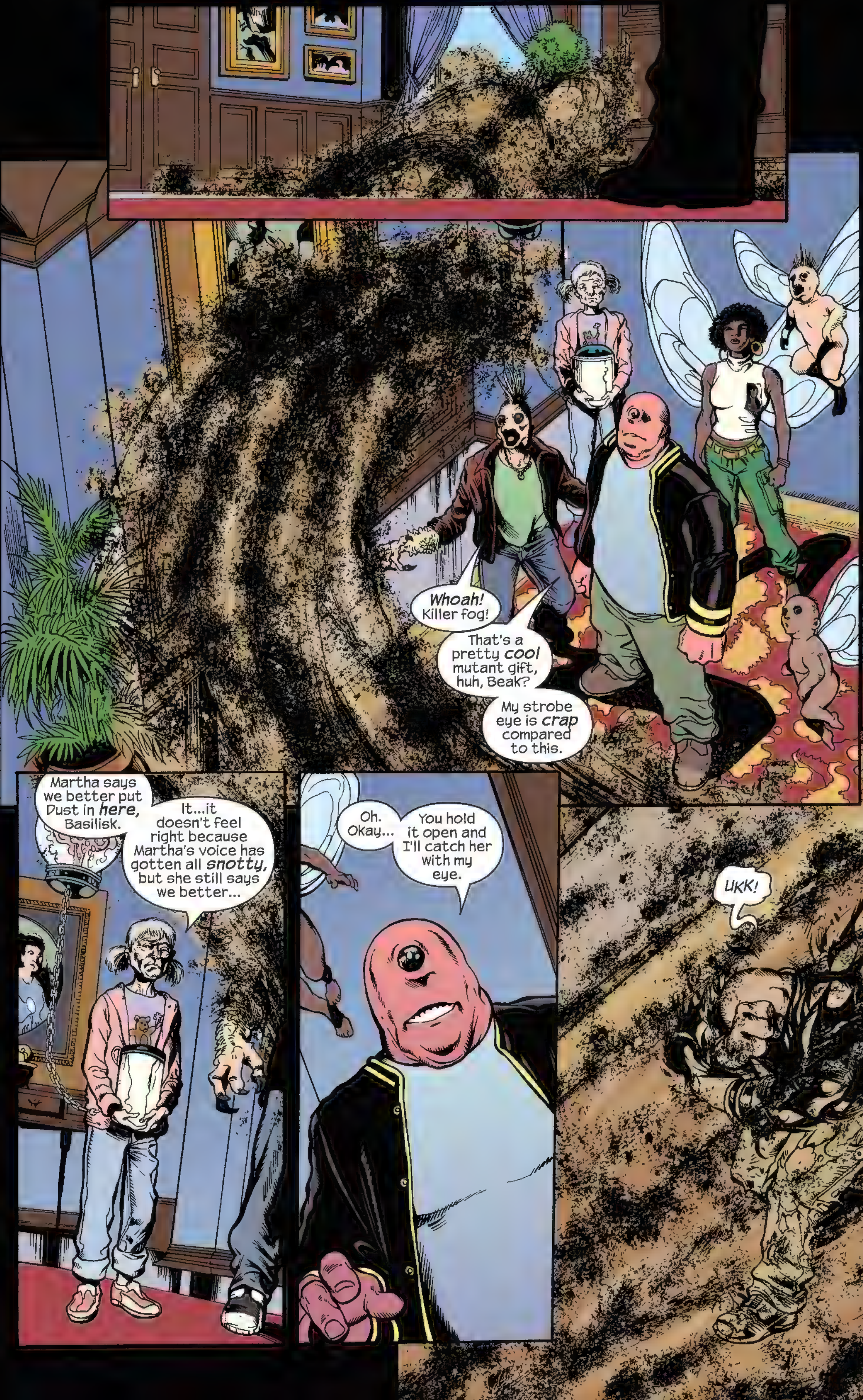

MEANWHILE...
?

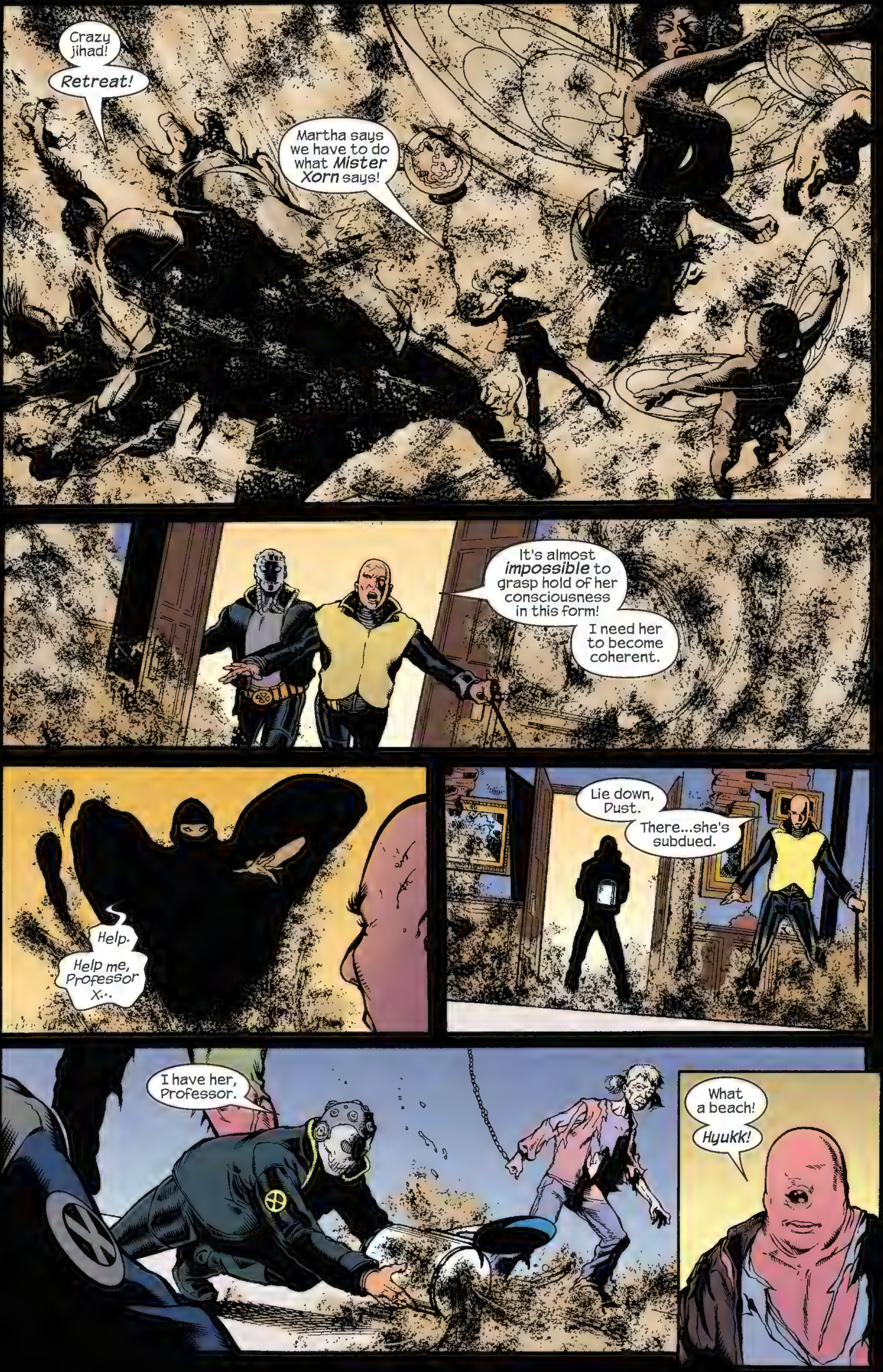

I *thought* I felt someone nearby.
Your telepathic presence is almost *undetectable* in granular form... incredible...
Oh, this is *Cerebra*-- the helmet amplifies my telepathic gifts.
I'm sure I'd be able to locate you with *this* on if I had to.
Using this equipment, I can watch over every mutant on Earth and scan the whole globe for trouble.
Would you like me to *find* someone for you?
Sooraya, isn't it? *"Dust"*.
We haven't had much of a chance to *talk* since Jean brought you to stay with us.
What?
I'm sure that *can't* be right...

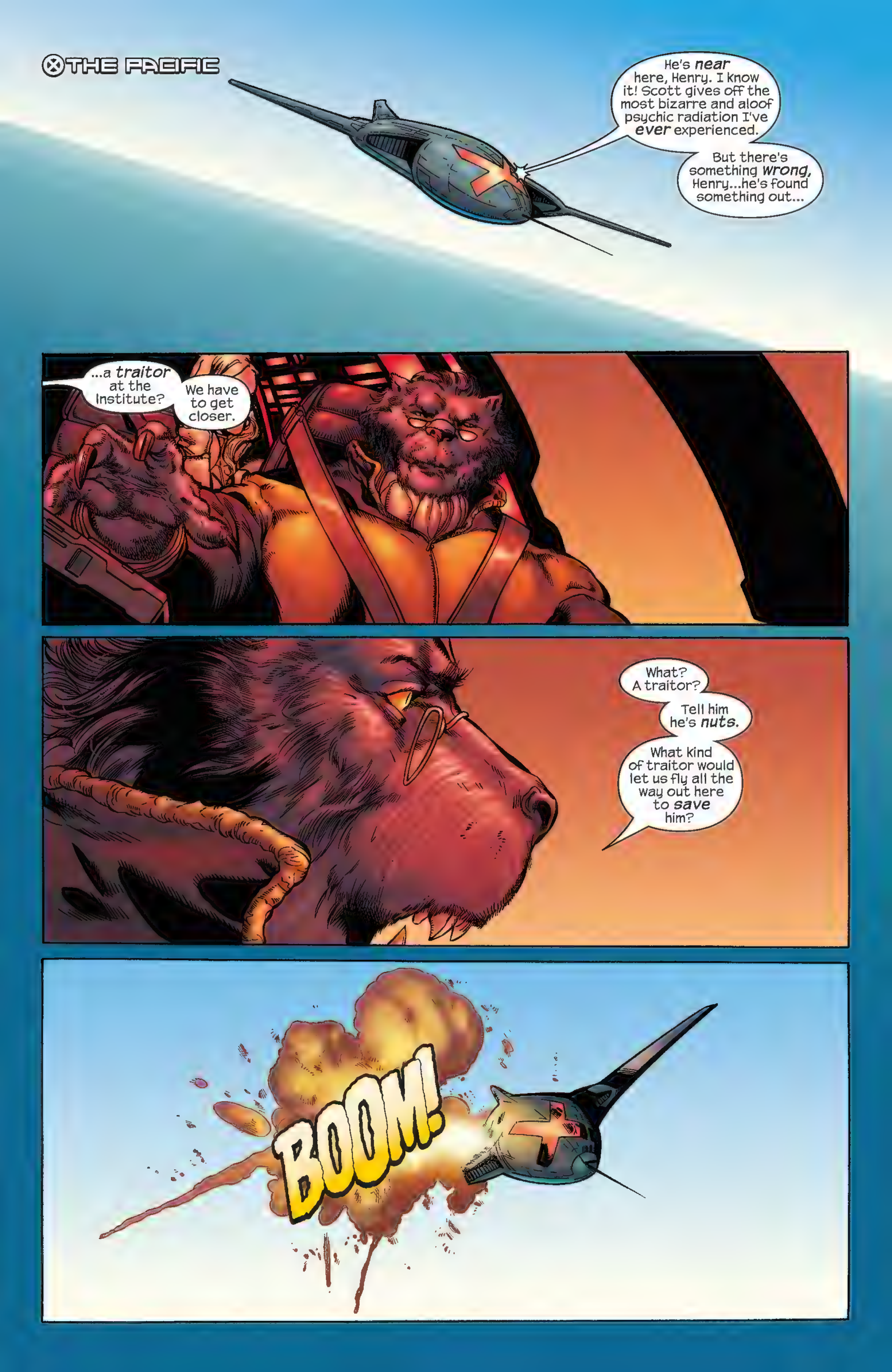

We put you in the *special class* because Mister Xorn has an affinity for sensitive and traumatized children.
No, I'm sure he wouldn't...
Mister Xorn...you're *here.*
One of your students seems to think something's *wrong...*
I know.
Something affected Dust *deeply*--she ran from the class, changing form as she went.
I think she may have lost control of her power.
PROFESSOR, LOOK OUT!

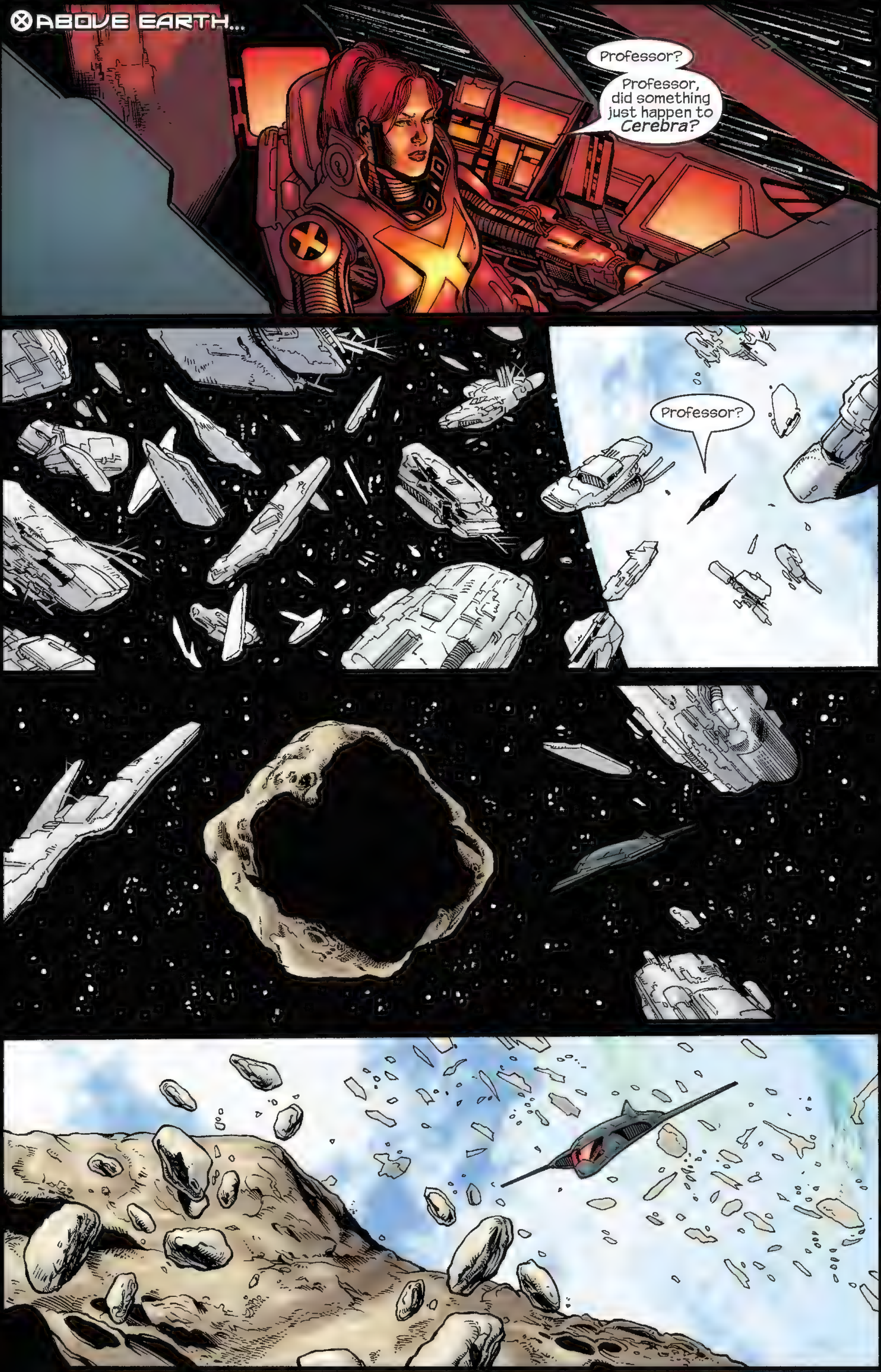

Sooraya!
STOP!
URRRH
Xorn, what's happening?
In this form, she could cut our flesh to the bone!

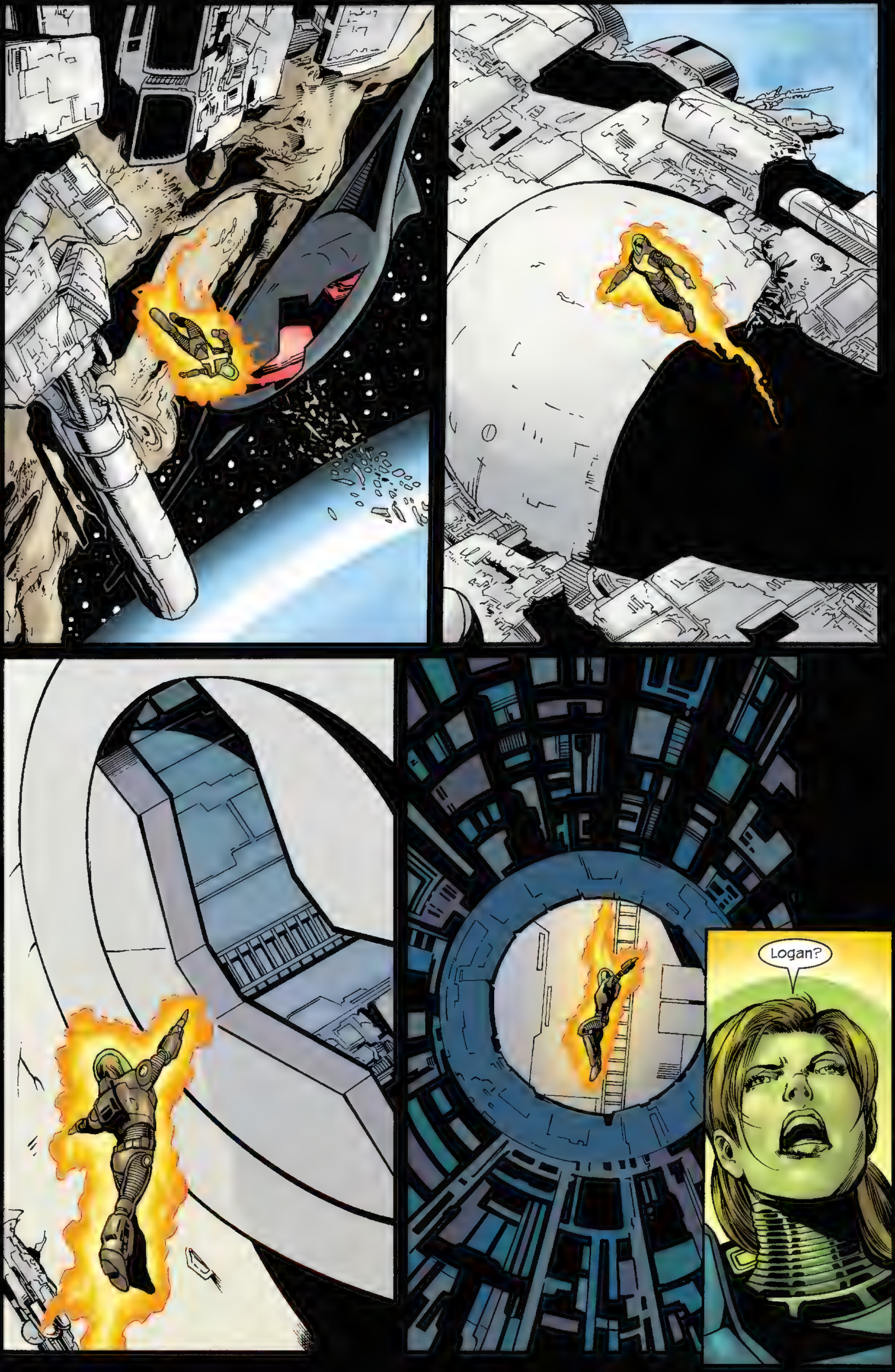

Sooraya!
Not Cerebra!
That's very delicate machinery!
Without it, I can't keep in touch with my X-Men!

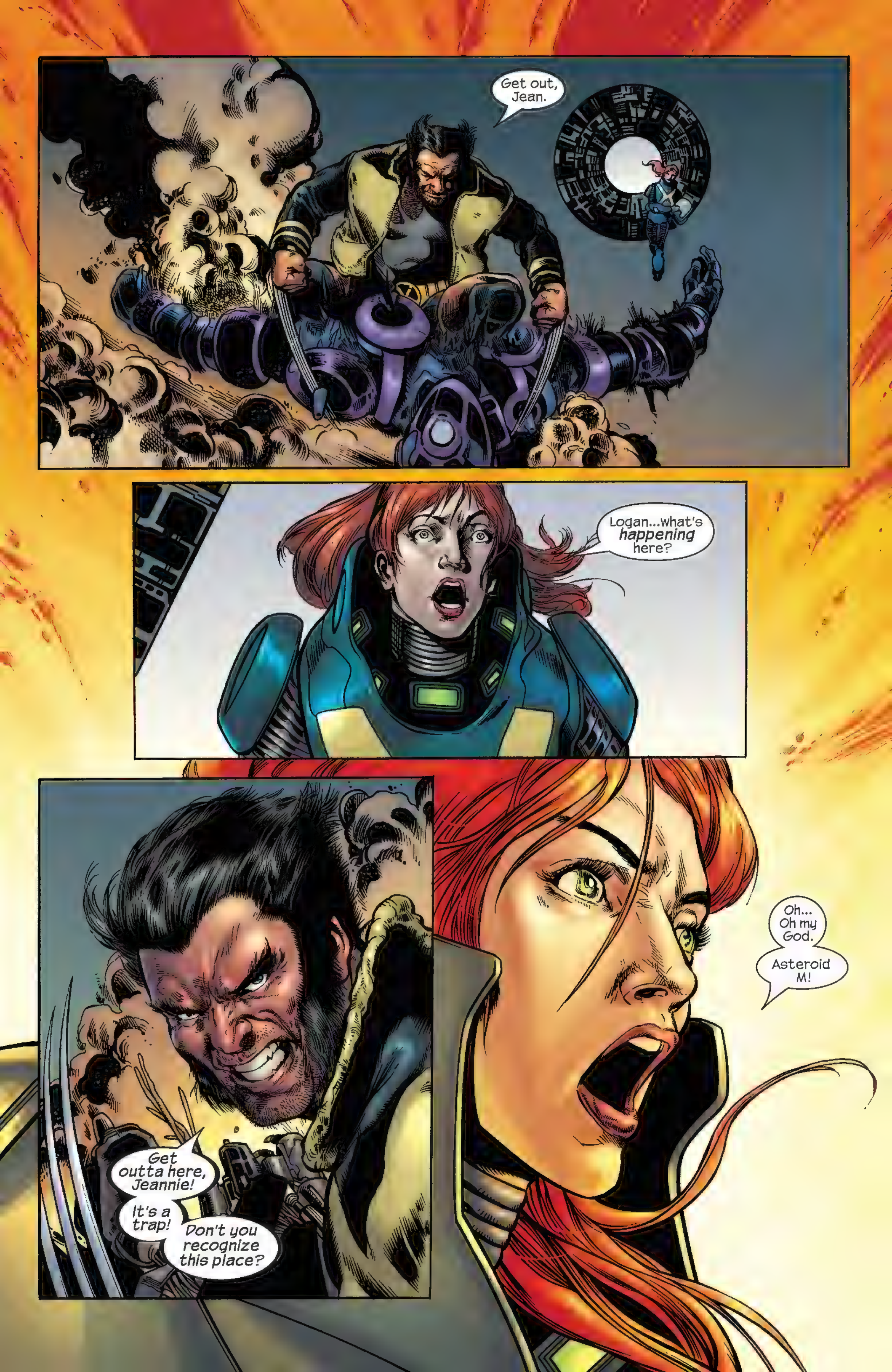

Whoah! Killer fog!
That's a pretty *cool* mutant gift, huh, Beak?
My strobe eye is *crap* compared to this.
Martha says we better put Dust in *here,* Basilisk.
It...it doesn't feel right because Martha's voice has gotten all *snotty,* but she still says we better...
Oh. Okay...
You hold it open and I'll catch her with my eye.
UKK!

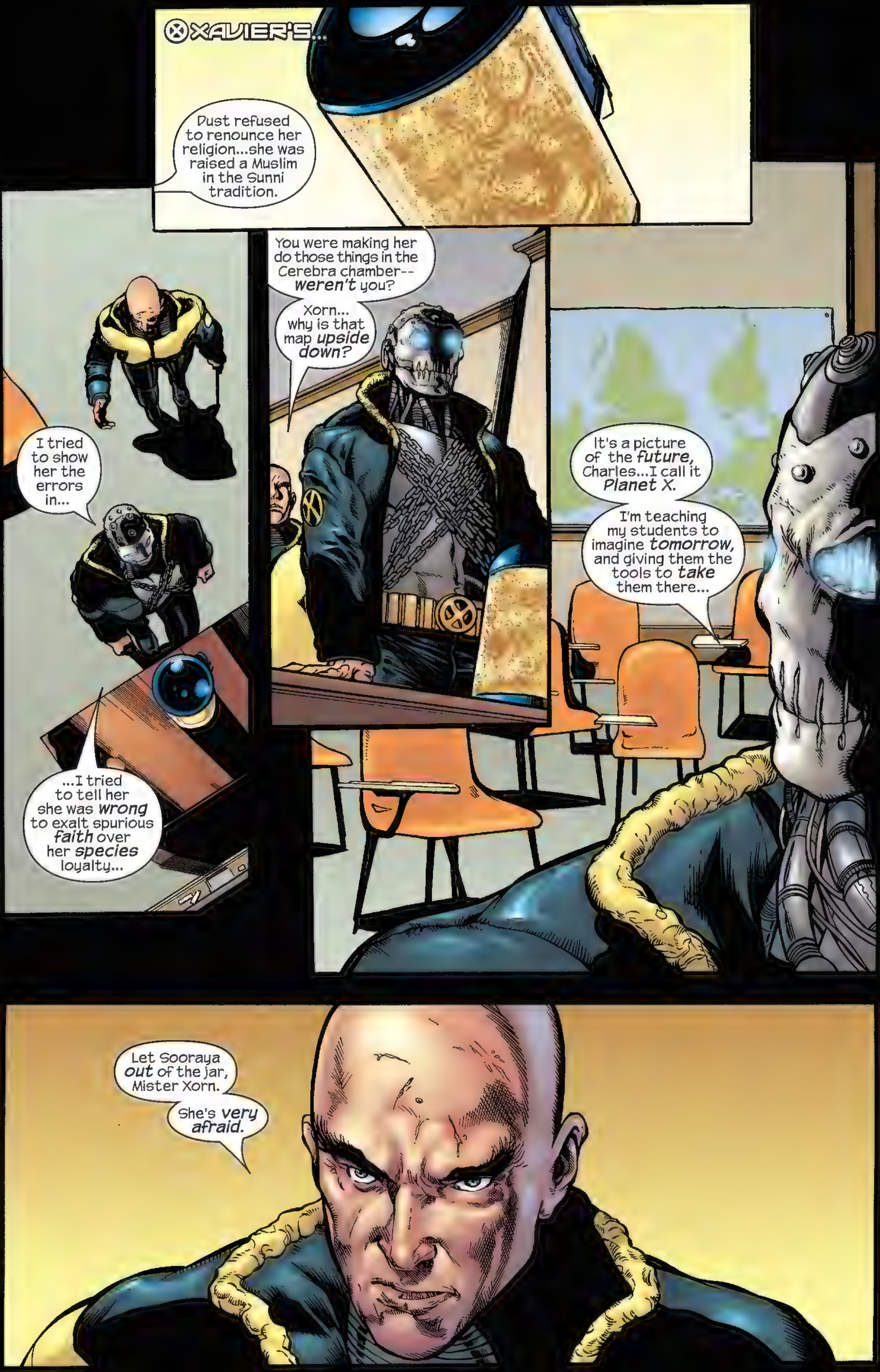

Crazy jihad!
Retreat!
Martha says we have to do what *Mister Xorn* says!
It's almost *impossible* to grasp hold of her consciousness in this form!
I need her to become coherent.
Help.
Help me, Professor X...
Lie down, Dust.
There...she's subdued.
I have her, Professor.
What a beach!
Hyukk!

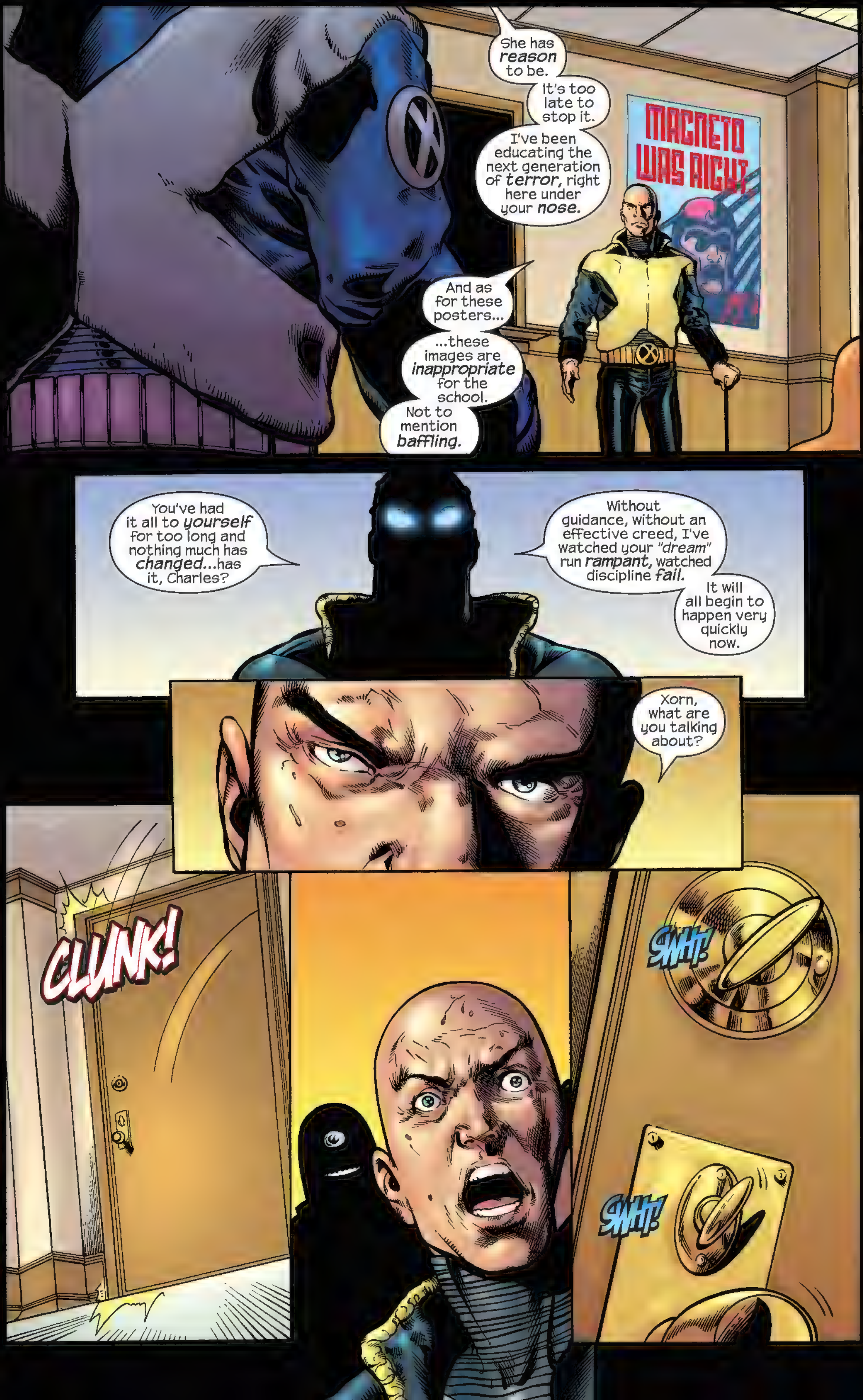

THE PACIFIC
He's near here, Henry. I know it! Scott gives off the most bizarre and aloof psychic radiation I've ever experienced.
But there's something wrong, Henry...he's found something out...
...a traitor at the Institute?
We have to get closer.
What? A traitor?
Tell him he's nuts.
What kind of traitor would let us fly all the way out here to save him?
BOOM!

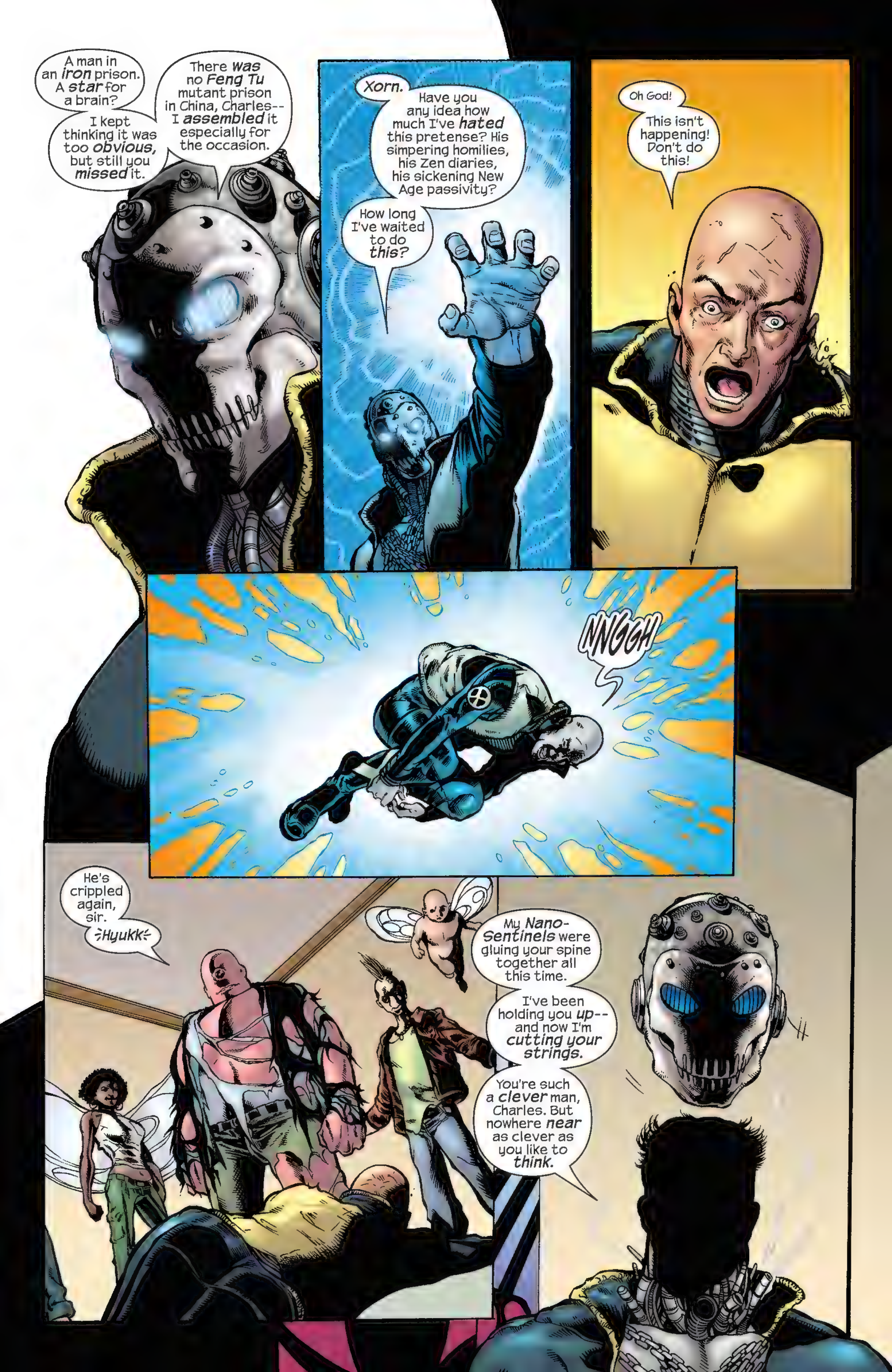

ABOVE EARTH...
Professor?
Professor, did something just happen to *Cerebra?*
Professor?

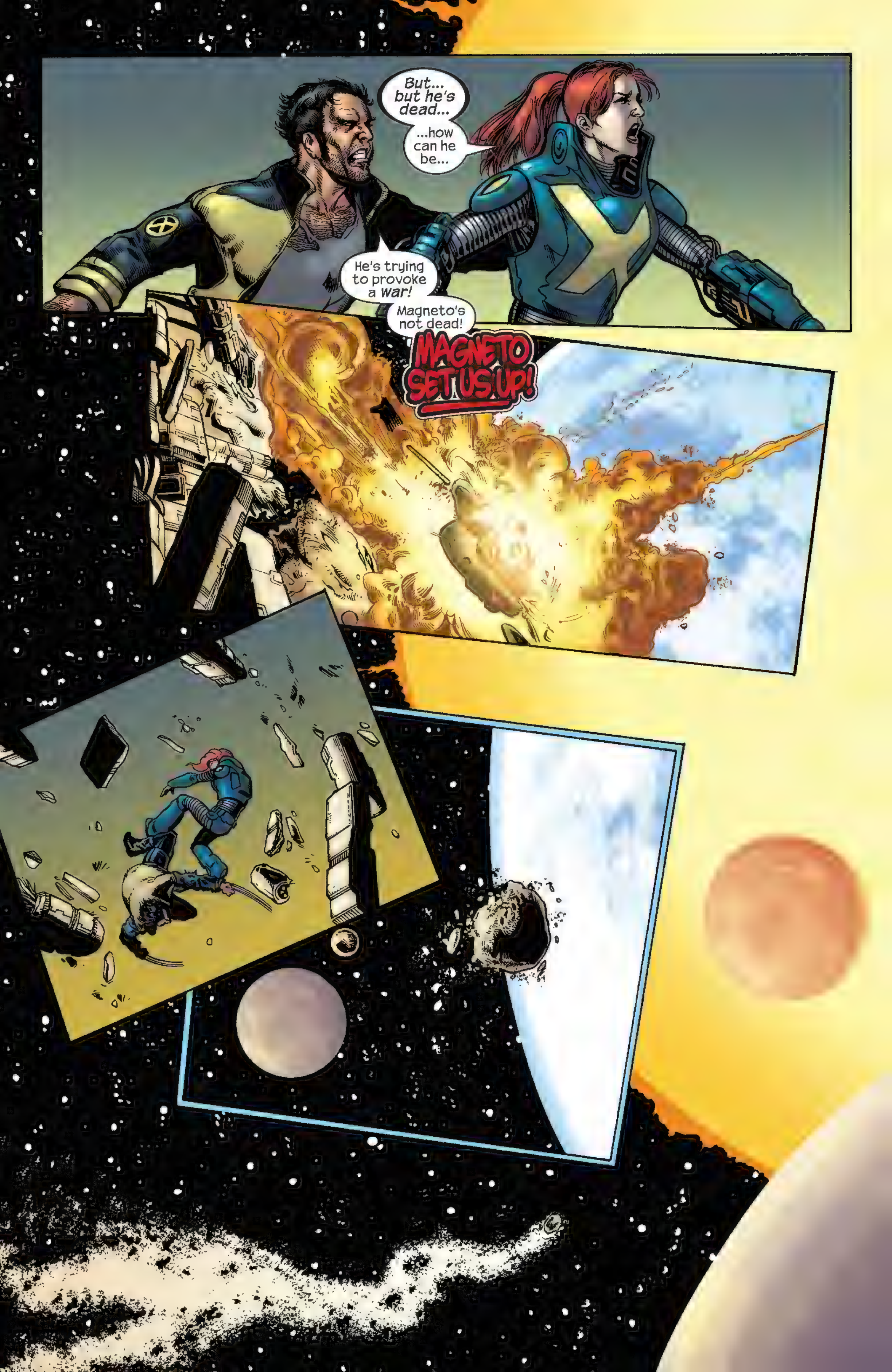

Logan?

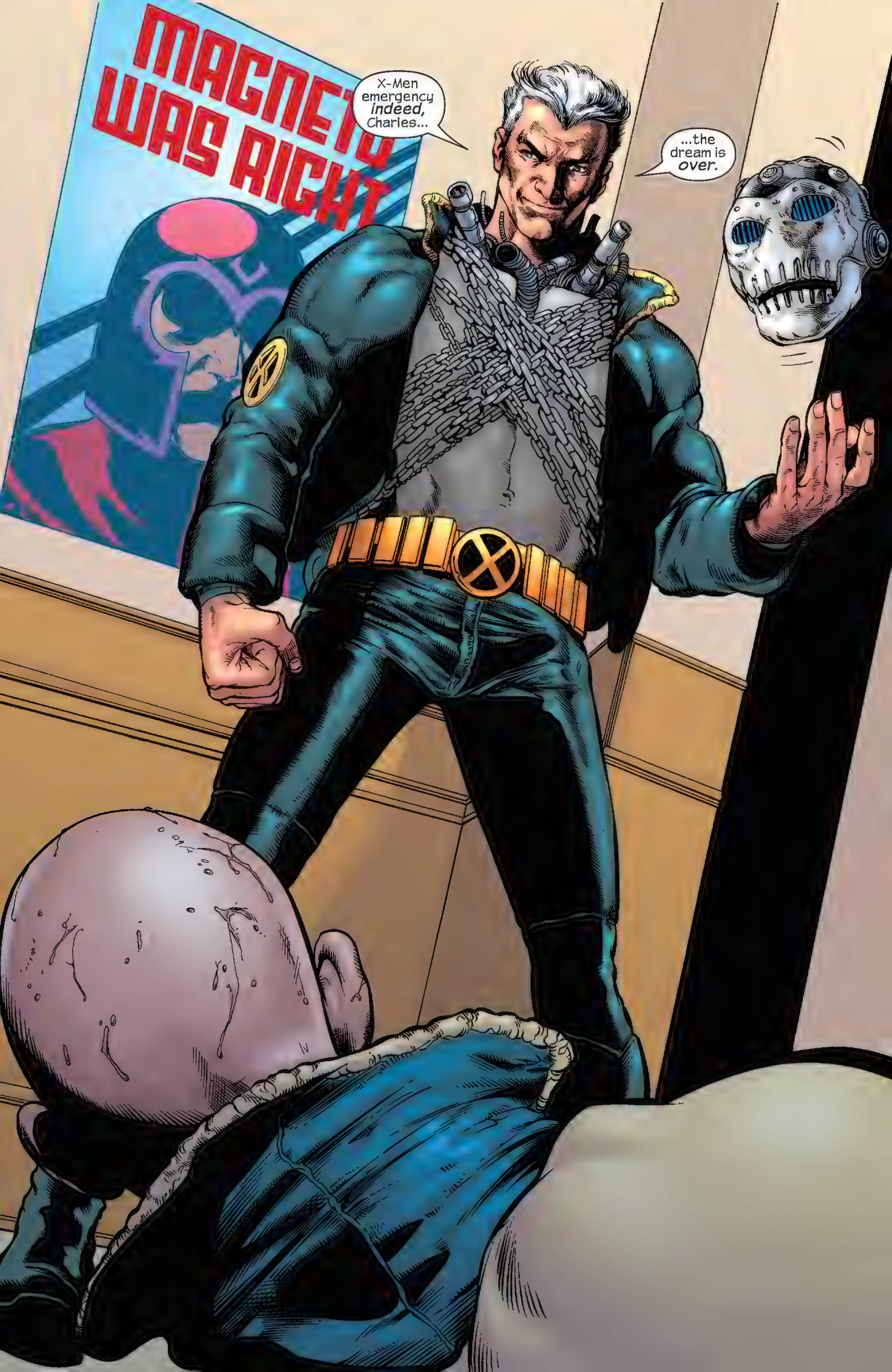

Get out, Jean.
Logan...what's *happening* here?
Get outta here, Jeannie!
It's a trap!
Don't you recognize this place?
Oh... Oh my God.
Asteroid M!

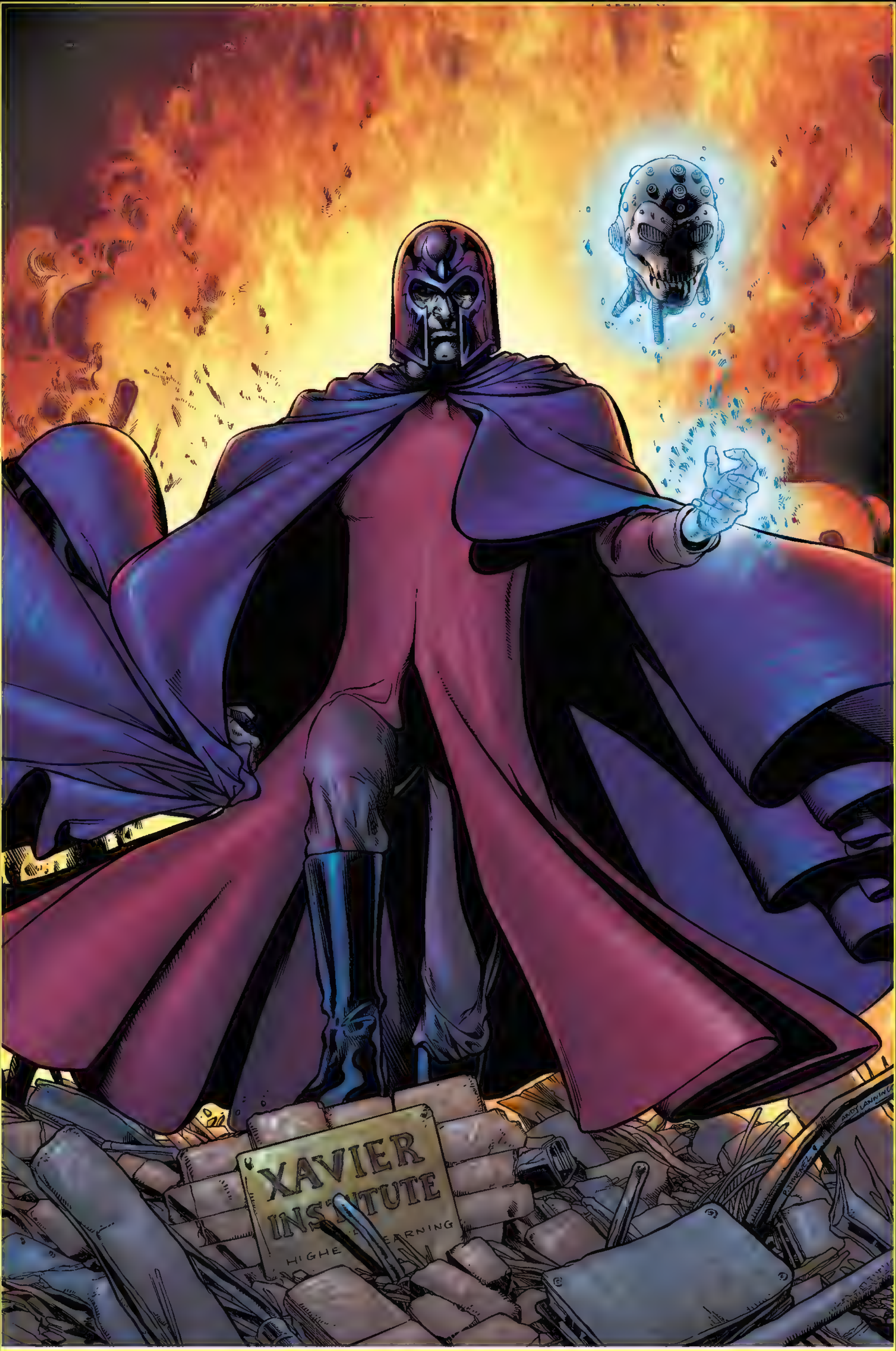

XAVIER'S...
Dust refused to renounce her religion...she was raised a Muslim in the Sunni tradition.
I tried to show her the errors in...
...I tried to tell her she was *wrong* to exalt spurious *faith* over her *species* loyalty...
You were making her do those things in the Cerebra chamber-- *weren't* you?
Xorn... why is that map *upside down?*
It's a picture of the *future,* Charles...I call it *Planet X.*
I'm teaching my students to imagine *tomorrow,* and giving them the tools to *take* them there...
Let Sooraya *out* of the jar, Mister Xorn.
She's *very afraid.*


She has *reason* to be.
It's too late to stop it.
I've been educating the next generation of *terror*, right here under your *nose*.
MAGNETO WAS RIGHT
And as for these posters...
...these images are *inappropriate* for the school.
Not to mention *baffling*.
You've had it all to *yourself* for too long and nothing much has *changed*...has it, Charles?
Without guidance, without an effective creed, I've watched your "dream" run *rampant*, watched discipline *fail*.
It will all begin to happen very quickly now.
Xorn, what are you talking about?
CLUNK!
SNIKT!
SNIKT!

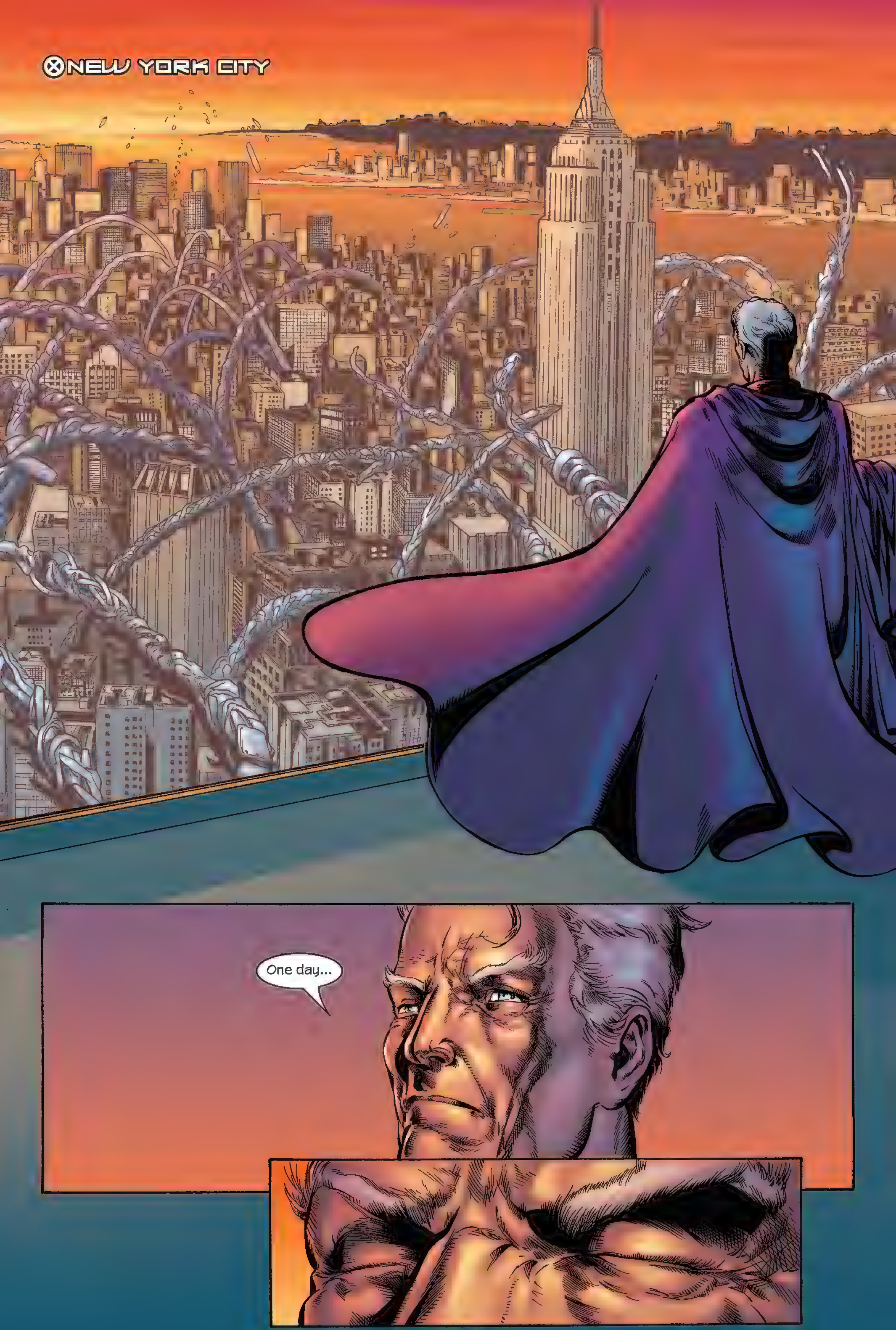

A man in an iron prison. A star for a brain?
I kept thinking it was too obvious, but still you missed it.
There was no Feng Tu mutant prison in China, Charles-- I assembled it especially for the occasion.
Xorn.
Have you any idea how much I've hated this pretense? His simpering homilies, his Zen diaries, his sickening New Age passivity?
How long I've waited to do this?
Oh God!
This isn't happening! Don't do this!
NNGGH
He's crippled again, sir.
Hyukk
My Nano-Sentinels were gluing your spine together all this time.
I've been holding you up-- and now I'm cutting your strings.
You're such a clever man, Charles. But nowhere near as clever as you like to think.

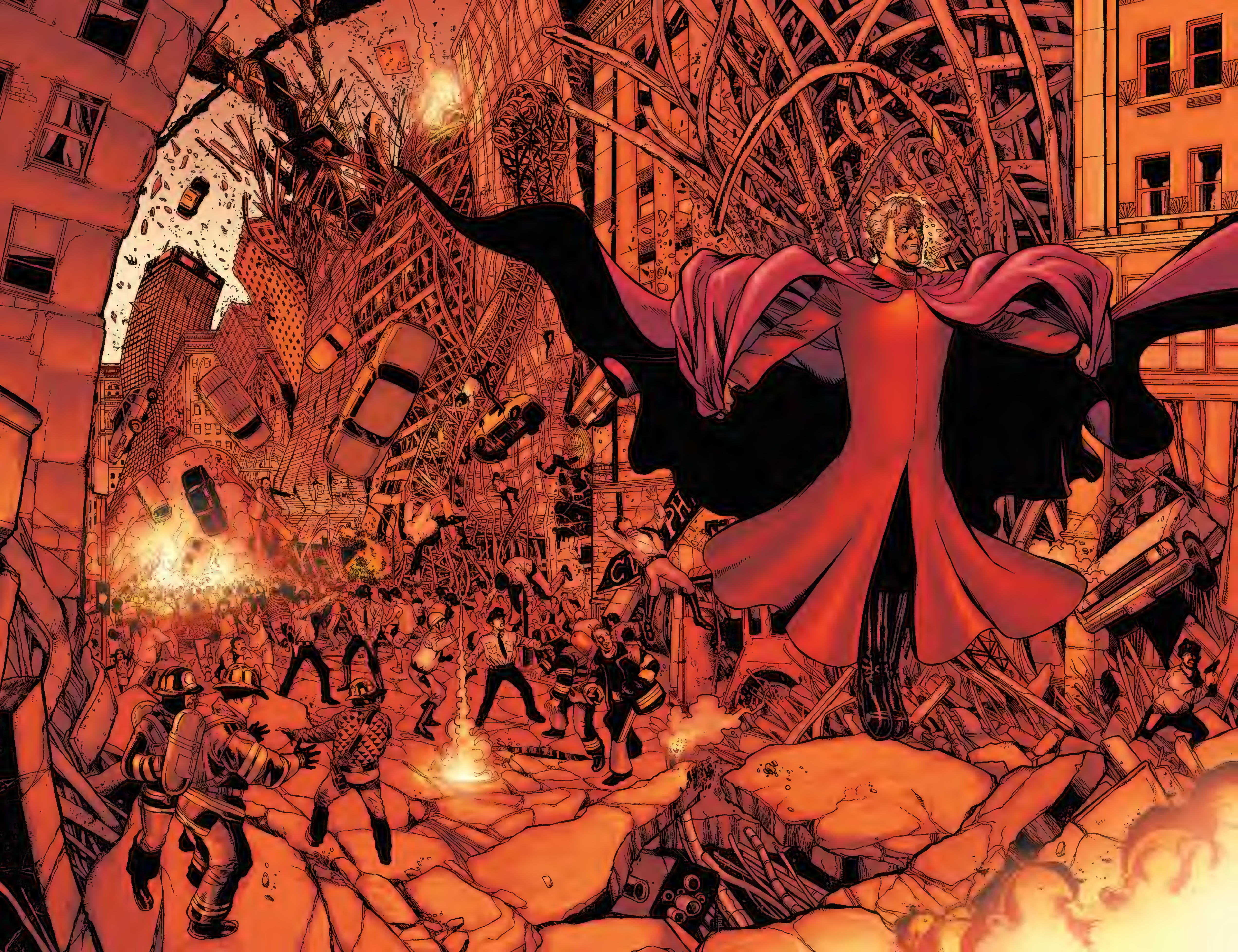

But... but he's dead...
...how can he be...
He's trying to provoke a war!
Magneto's not dead!
MAGNETO SET US UP!

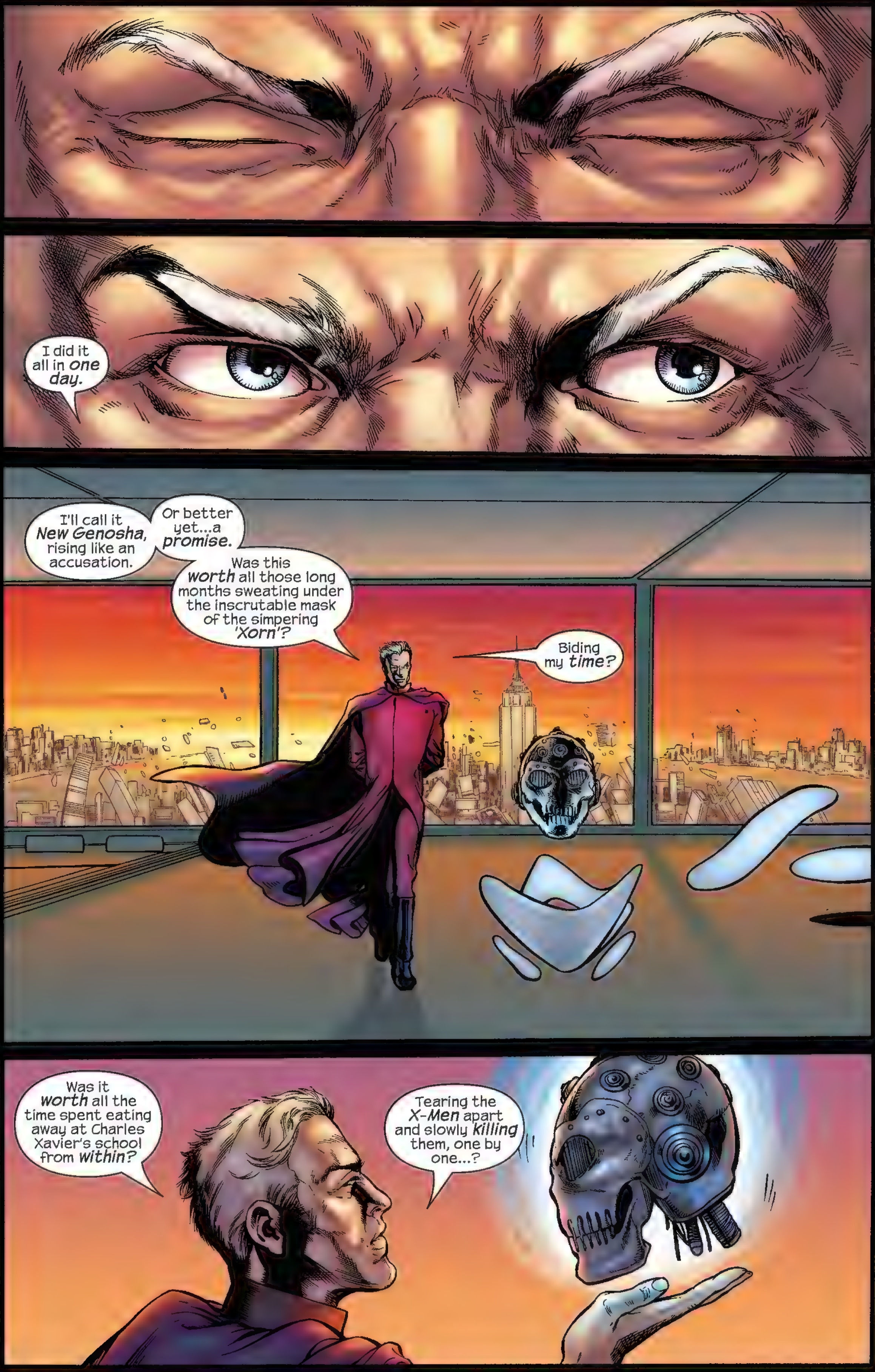

MAGNETO WAS RIGHT
X-Men emergency *indeed,* Charles...
...the dream is *over.*

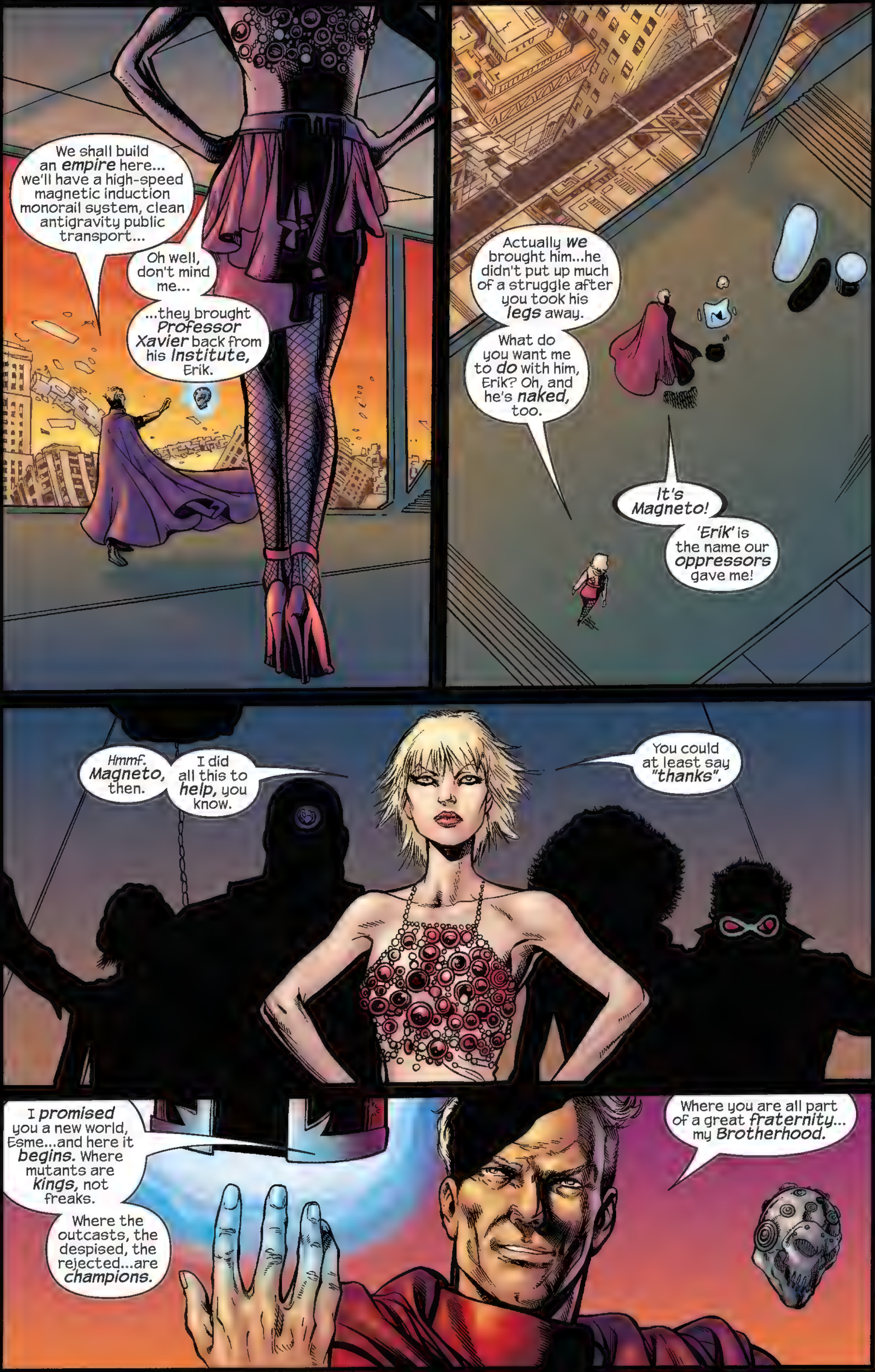

XAVIER
INS TUTE
HIGHE EARNING

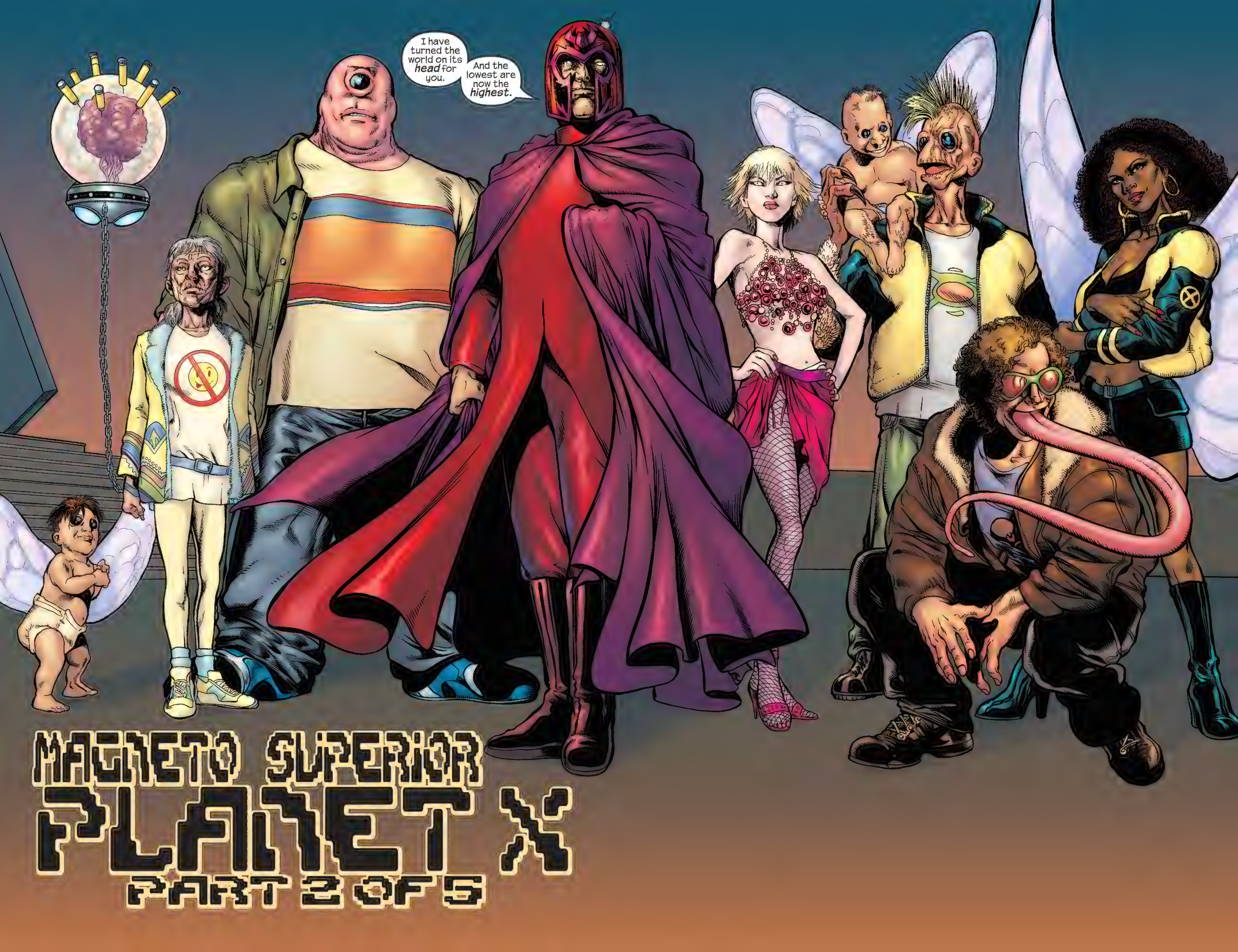
NEW X-MEN #147
"PLANET X PART TWO: MAGNETO SUPERIOR"

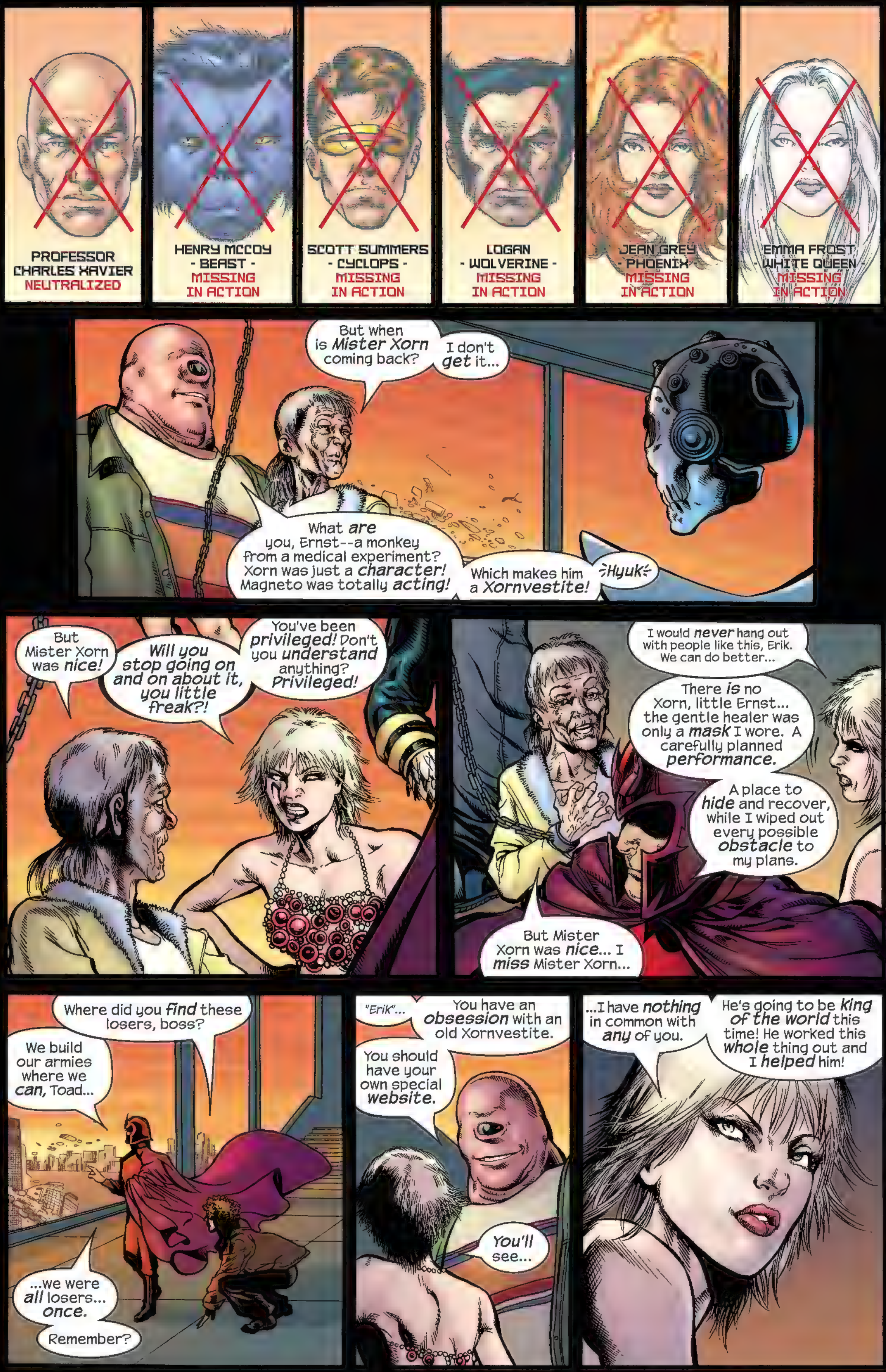

NEW YORK CITY
One day...

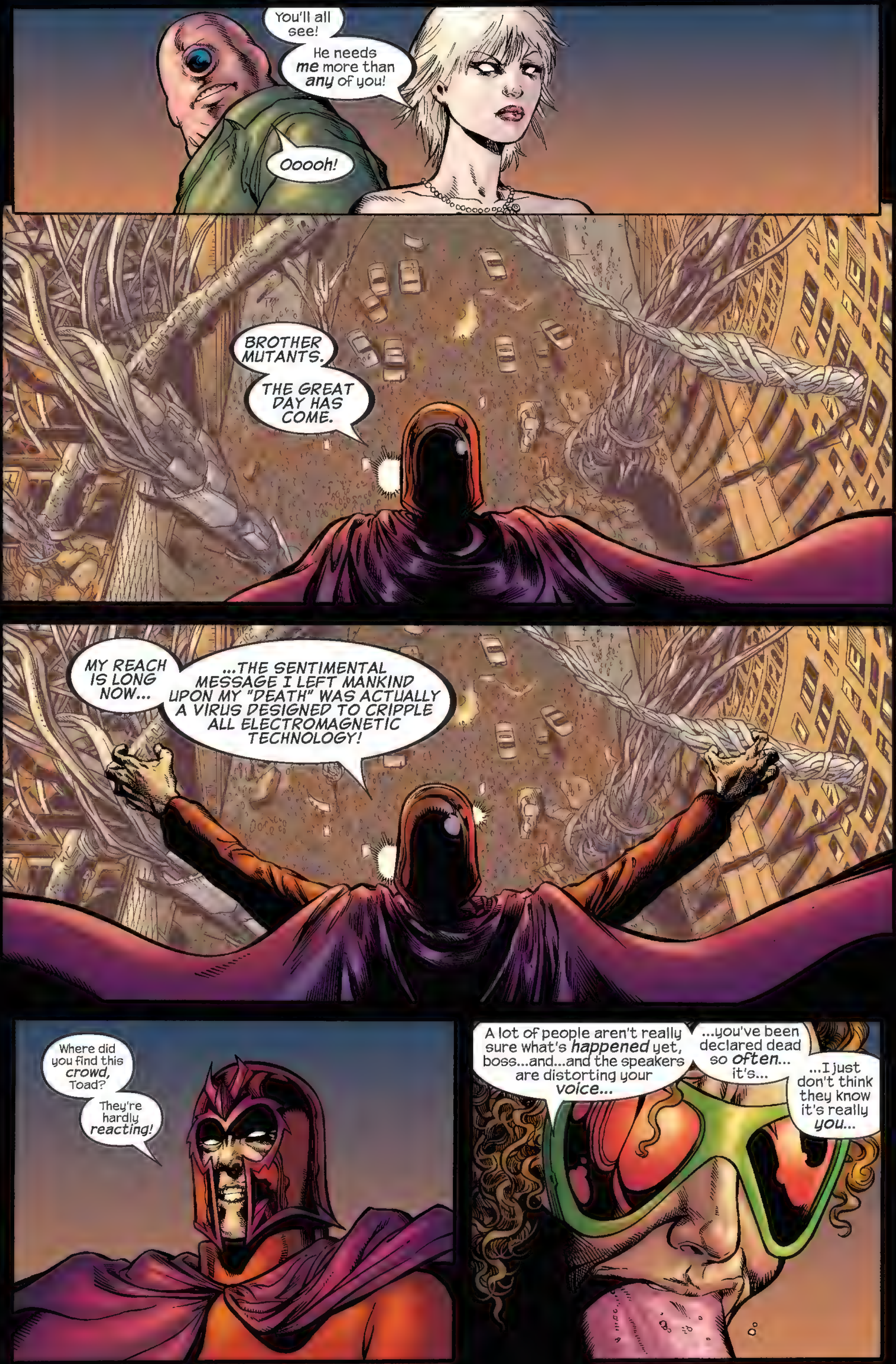


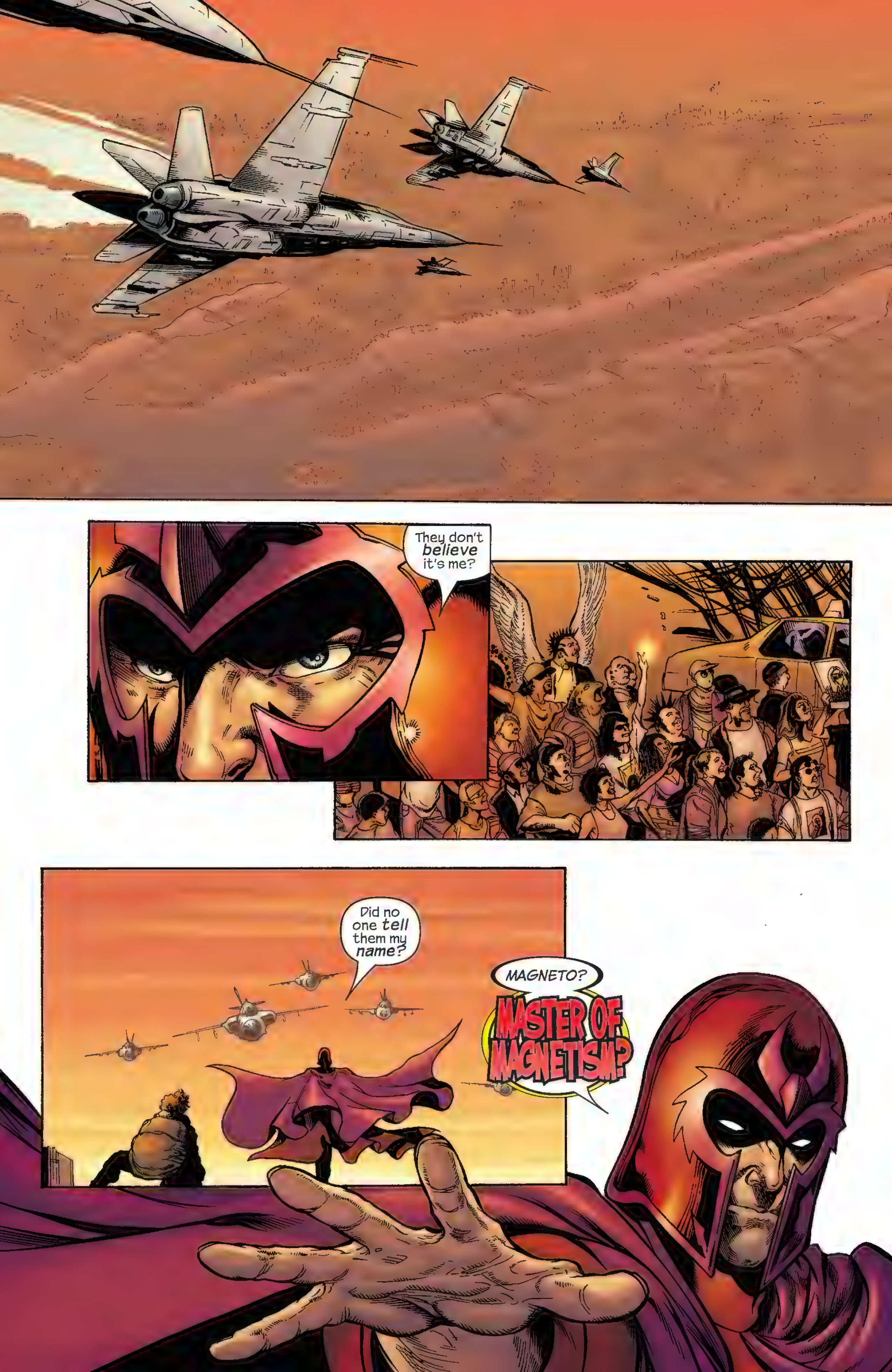

I did it all in *one day.*
I'll call it *New Genosha,* rising like an accusation.
Or better yet...a *promise.*
Was this *worth* all those long months sweating under the inscrutable mask of the simpering *'Xorn'?*
Biding my *time?*
Was it *worth* all the time spent eating away at Charles Xavier's school from *within?*
Tearing the *X-Men* apart and slowly *killing* them, one by one...?

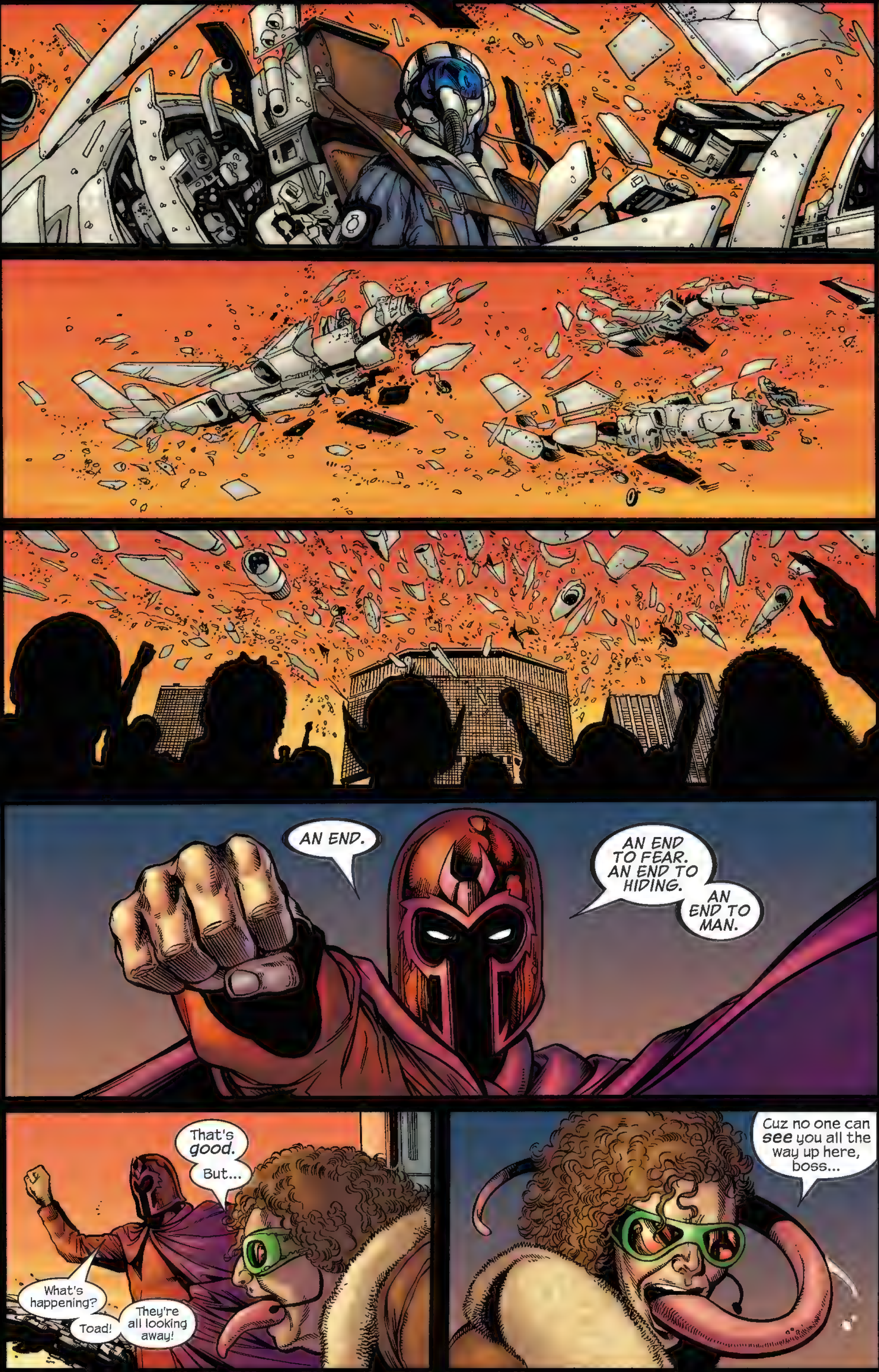

We shall build an *empire* here... we'll have a high-speed magnetic induction monorail system, clean antigravity public transport...
Oh well, don't mind me...
...they brought *Professor Xavier* back from his *Institute,* Erik.
Actually *we* brought him...he didn't put up much of a struggle after you took his *legs* away.
What do you want me to *do* with him, Erik? Oh, and he's *naked,* too.
It's Magneto!
'Erik' is the name our *oppressors* gave me!
Hmmf. Magneto, then.
I did all this to *help,* you know.
You could at least say *"thanks".*
I *promised* you a new world, Esme...and here it *begins.* Where mutants are *kings,* not freaks.
Where the outcasts, the despised, the rejected...are *champions.*
Where you are all part of a great *fraternity...* my *Brotherhood.*

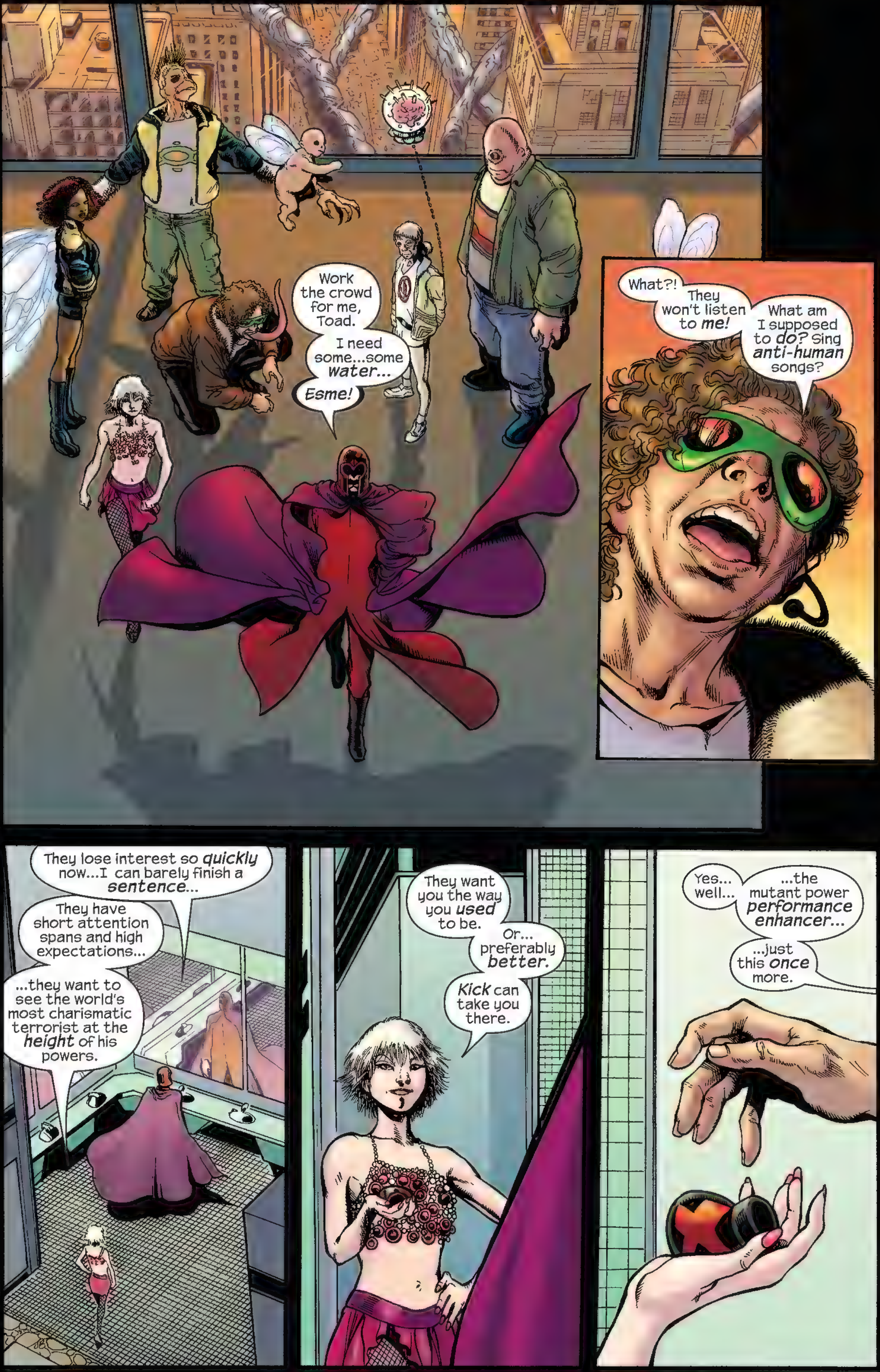

I have turned the world on its *head* for you.
And the lowest are now the *highest.*
MAGNETO SUPERIOR
PLANET X
PART 2 OF 5

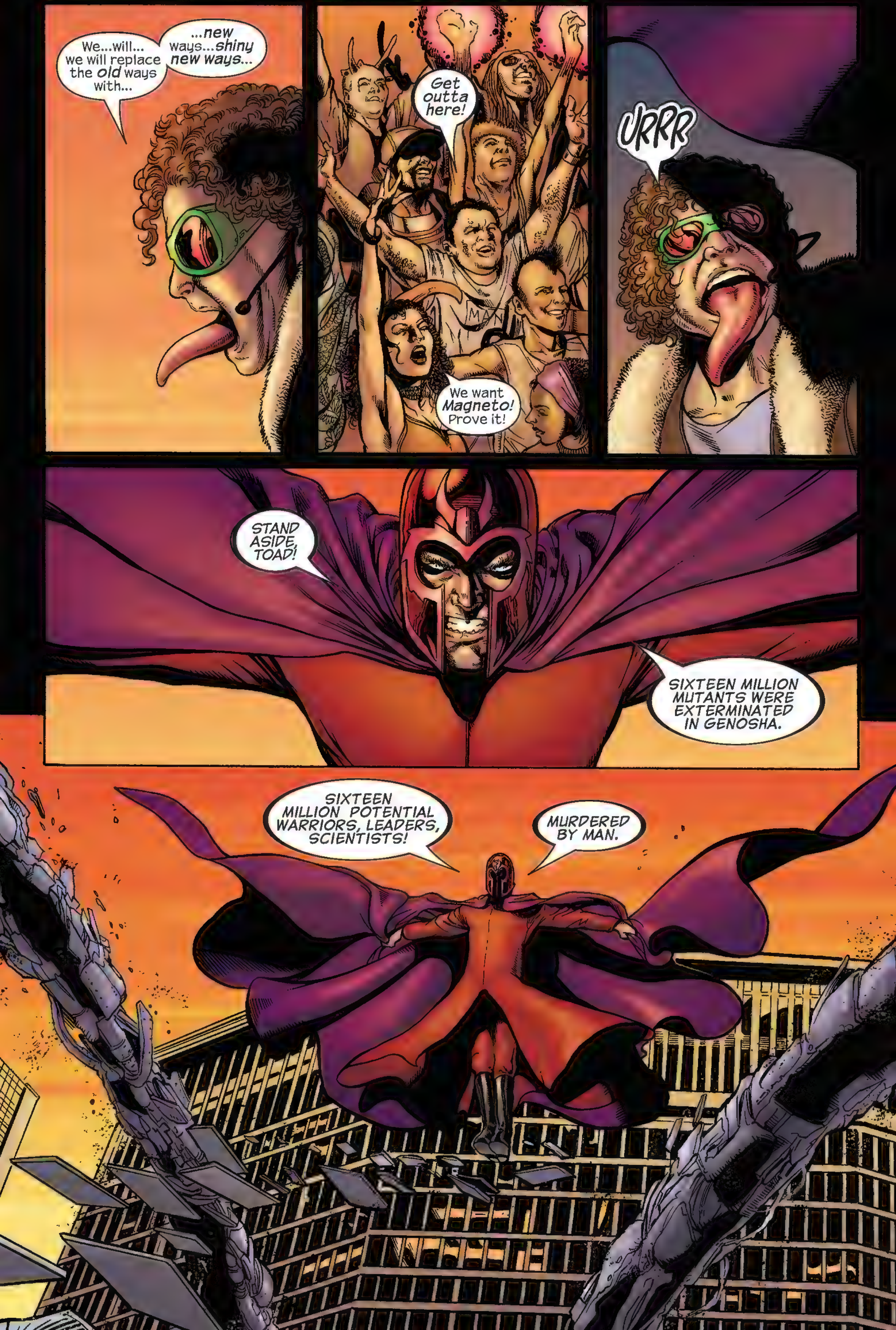

PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER NEUTRALIZED
HENRY MCCOY - BEAST - MISSING IN ACTION
SCOTT SUMMERS - CYCLOPS - MISSING IN ACTION
LOGAN - WOLVERINE - MISSING IN ACTION
JEAN GREY - PHOENIX - MISSING IN ACTION
EMMA FROST - WHITE QUEEN - MISSING IN ACTION
But when is Mister Xorn coming back?
I don't get it...
What are you, Ernst--a monkey from a medical experiment? Xorn was just a character! Magneto was totally acting!
Which makes him a Xornvestite!
Hyuk
But Mister Xorn was nice!
Will you stop going on and on about it, you little freak?!
You've been privileged! Don't you understand anything? Privileged!
I would never hang out with people like this, Erik. We can do better...
There is no Xorn, little Ernst... the gentle healer was only a mask I wore. A carefully planned performance.
A place to hide and recover, while I wiped out every possible obstacle to my plans.
But Mister Xorn was nice... I miss Mister Xorn...
Where did you find these losers, boss?
We build our armies where we can, Toad...
...we were all losers... once.
Remember?
"Erik"...
You have an obsession with an old Xornvestite.
You should have your own special website.
You'll see...
...I have nothing in common with any of you.
He's going to be king of the world this time! He worked this whole thing out and I helped him!

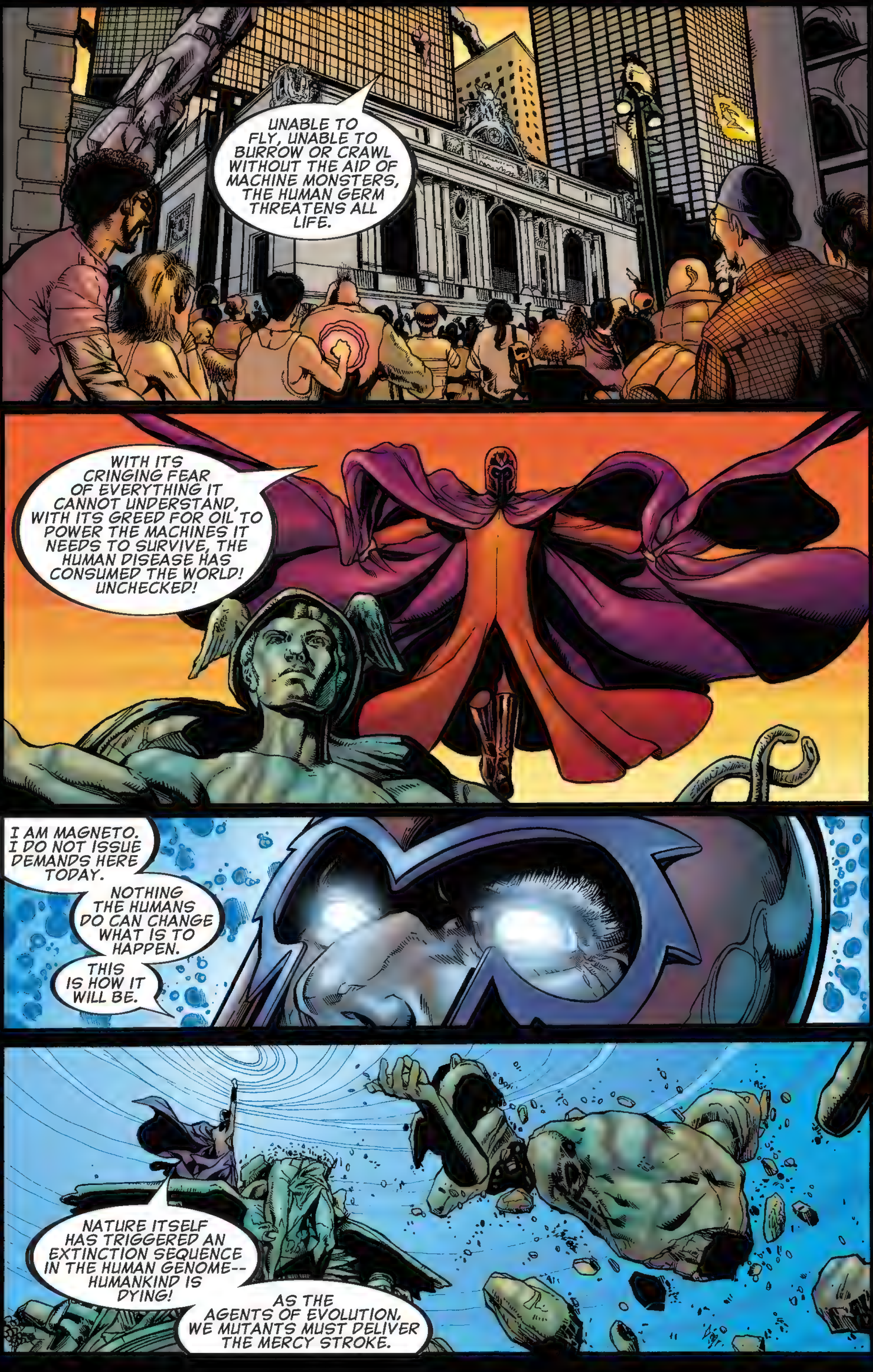

You'll all see!
He needs *me* more than *any* of you!
Ooooh!
BROTHER MUTANTS.
THE GREAT DAY HAS COME.
MY REACH IS LONG NOW...
...THE SENTIMENTAL MESSAGE I LEFT MANKIND UPON MY "DEATH" WAS ACTUALLY A VIRUS DESIGNED TO CRIPPLE ALL ELECTROMAGNETIC TECHNOLOGY!
Where did you find this *crowd,* Toad?
They're hardly *reacting!*
A lot of people aren't really sure what's *happened* yet, boss...and...and the speakers are distorting your *voice*...
...you've been declared dead so *often*... it's...
...I just don't think they know it's really *you*...

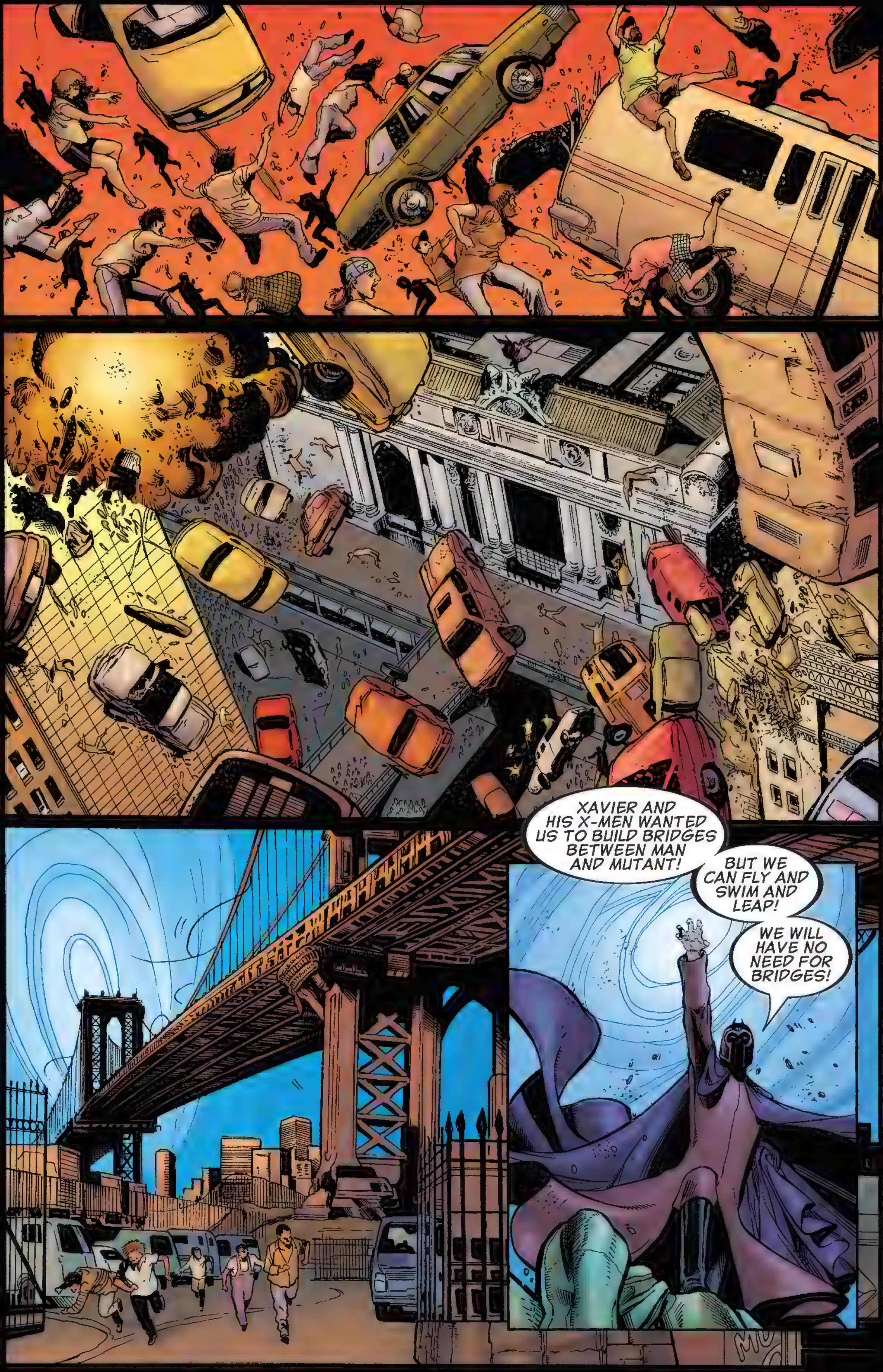

They don't *believe* it's me?
Did no one *tell* them my *name?*
MAGNETO?
MASTER OF MAGNETISM?

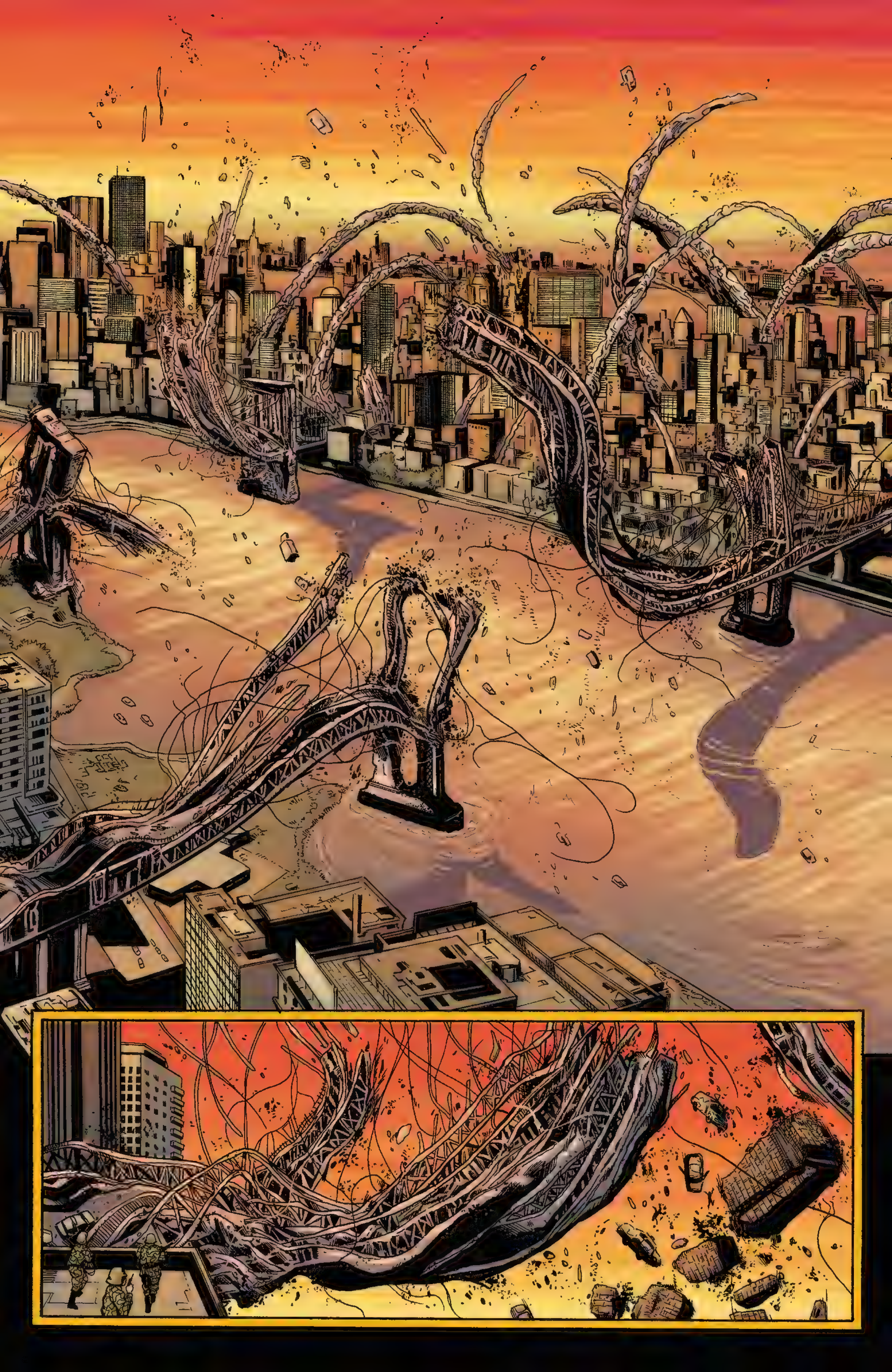

AN END.
AN END TO FEAR. AN END TO HIDING.
AN END TO MAN.
That's *good.*
But...
What's happening?
Toad!
They're all looking away!
Cuz no one can *see* you all the way up here, boss...

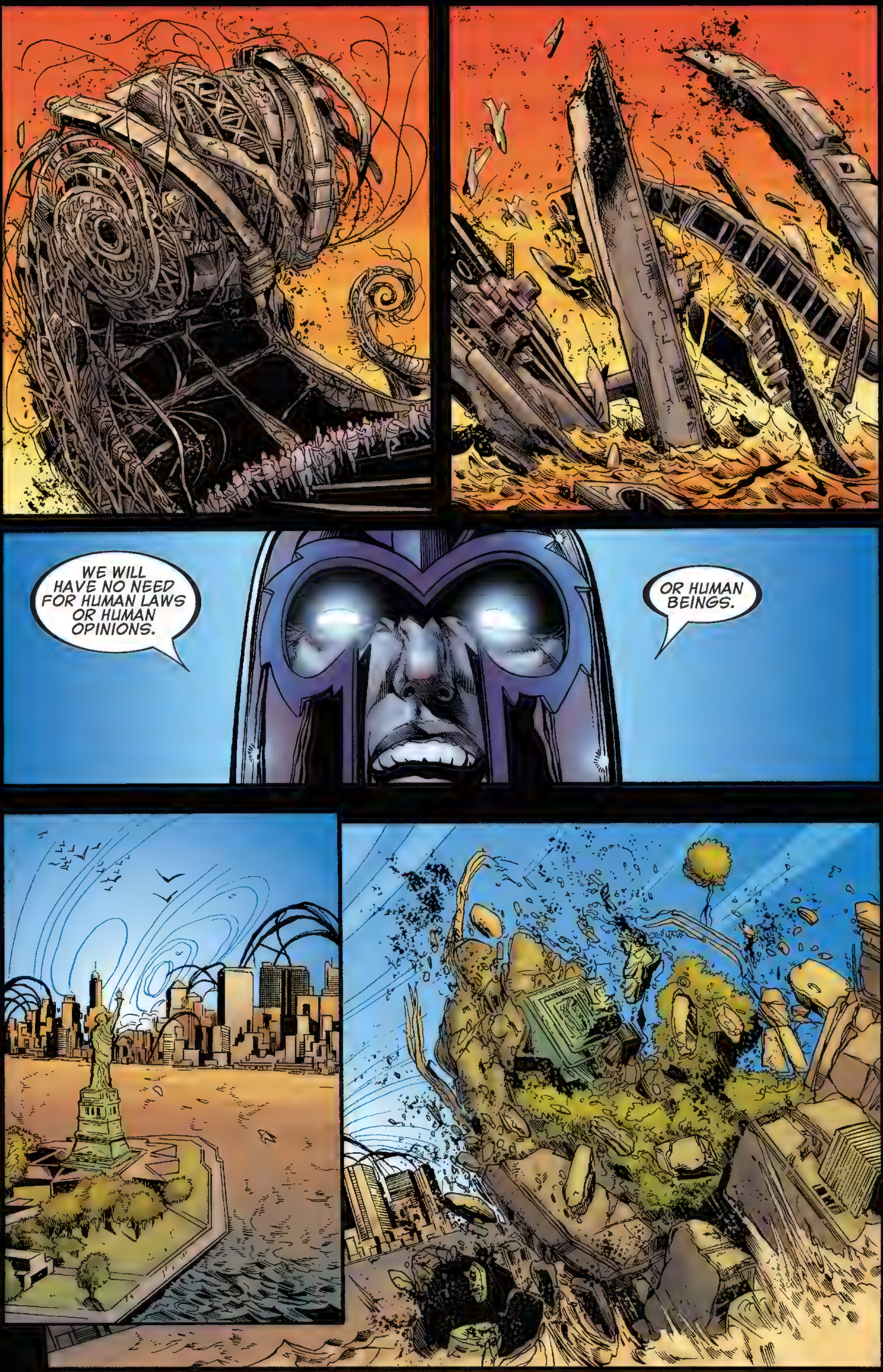

Work the crowd for me, Toad.
I need some...some *water*...
Esme!
What?!
They won't listen to *me!*
What am I supposed to *do?* Sing *anti-human* songs?
They lose interest so *quickly* now...I can barely finish a *sentence*...
They have short attention spans and high expectations...
...they want to see the world's most charismatic terrorist at the *height* of his powers.
They want you the way you *used* to be.
Or... preferably *better.*
Kick can take you there.
Yes... well...
...the mutant power *performance enhancer*...
...just this *once* more.

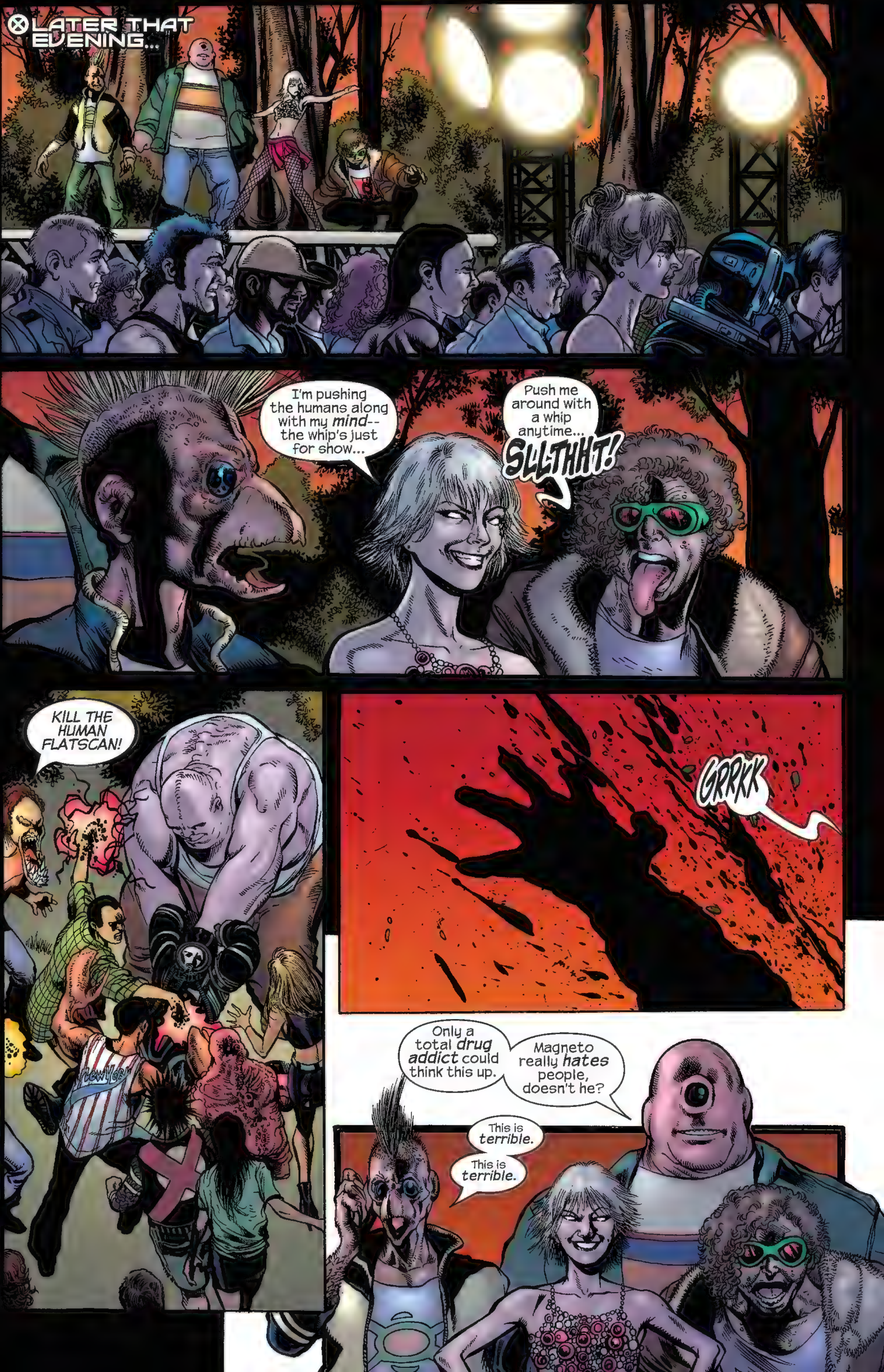

We...will... we will replace the *old* ways with...
...new ways...*shiny new ways*...
Get outta here!
We want *Magneto!* Prove it!
URRR
STAND ASIDE, TOAD!
SIXTEEN MILLION MUTANTS WERE EXTERMINATED IN GENOSHA.
SIXTEEN MILLION POTENTIAL WARRIORS, LEADERS, SCIENTISTS!
MURDERED BY MAN.

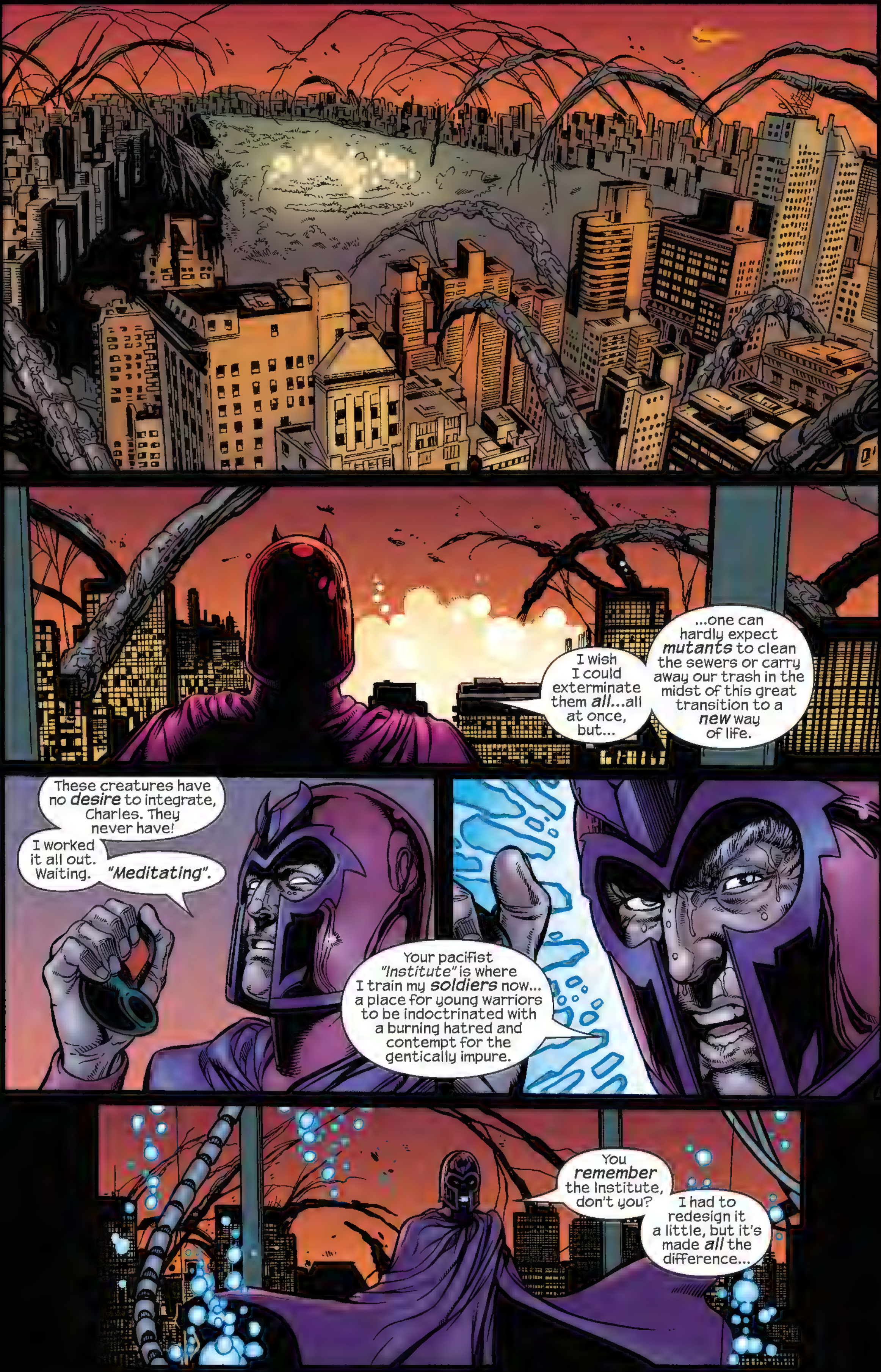

UNABLE TO FLY, UNABLE TO BURROW OR CRAWL WITHOUT THE AID OF MACHINE MONSTERS, THE HUMAN GERM THREATENS ALL LIFE.
WITH ITS CRINGING FEAR OF EVERYTHING IT CANNOT UNDERSTAND, WITH ITS GREED FOR OIL TO POWER THE MACHINES IT NEEDS TO SURVIVE, THE HUMAN DISEASE HAS CONSUMED THE WORLD! UNCHECKED!
I AM MAGNETO. I DO NOT ISSUE DEMANDS HERE TODAY.
NOTHING THE HUMANS DO CAN CHANGE WHAT IS TO HAPPEN.
THIS IS HOW IT WILL BE.
NATURE ITSELF HAS TRIGGERED AN EXTINCTION SEQUENCE IN THE HUMAN GENOME-- HUMANKIND IS DYING!
AS THE AGENTS OF EVOLUTION, WE MUTANTS MUST DELIVER THE MERCY STROKE.

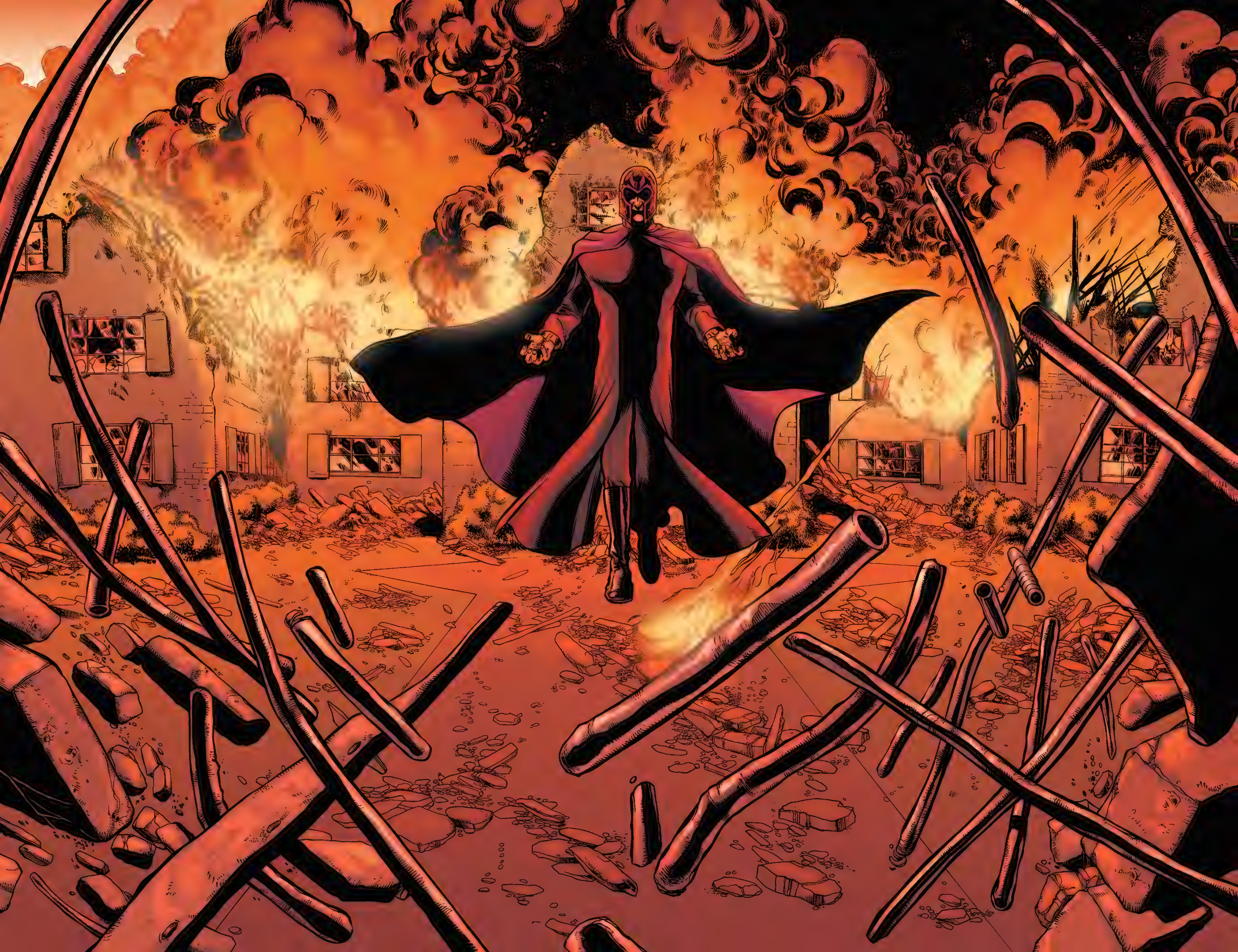

XAVIER AND HIS X-MEN WANTED US TO BUILD BRIDGES BETWEEN MAN AND MUTANT!
BUT WE CAN FLY AND SWIM AND LEAP!
WE WILL HAVE NO NEED FOR BRIDGES!

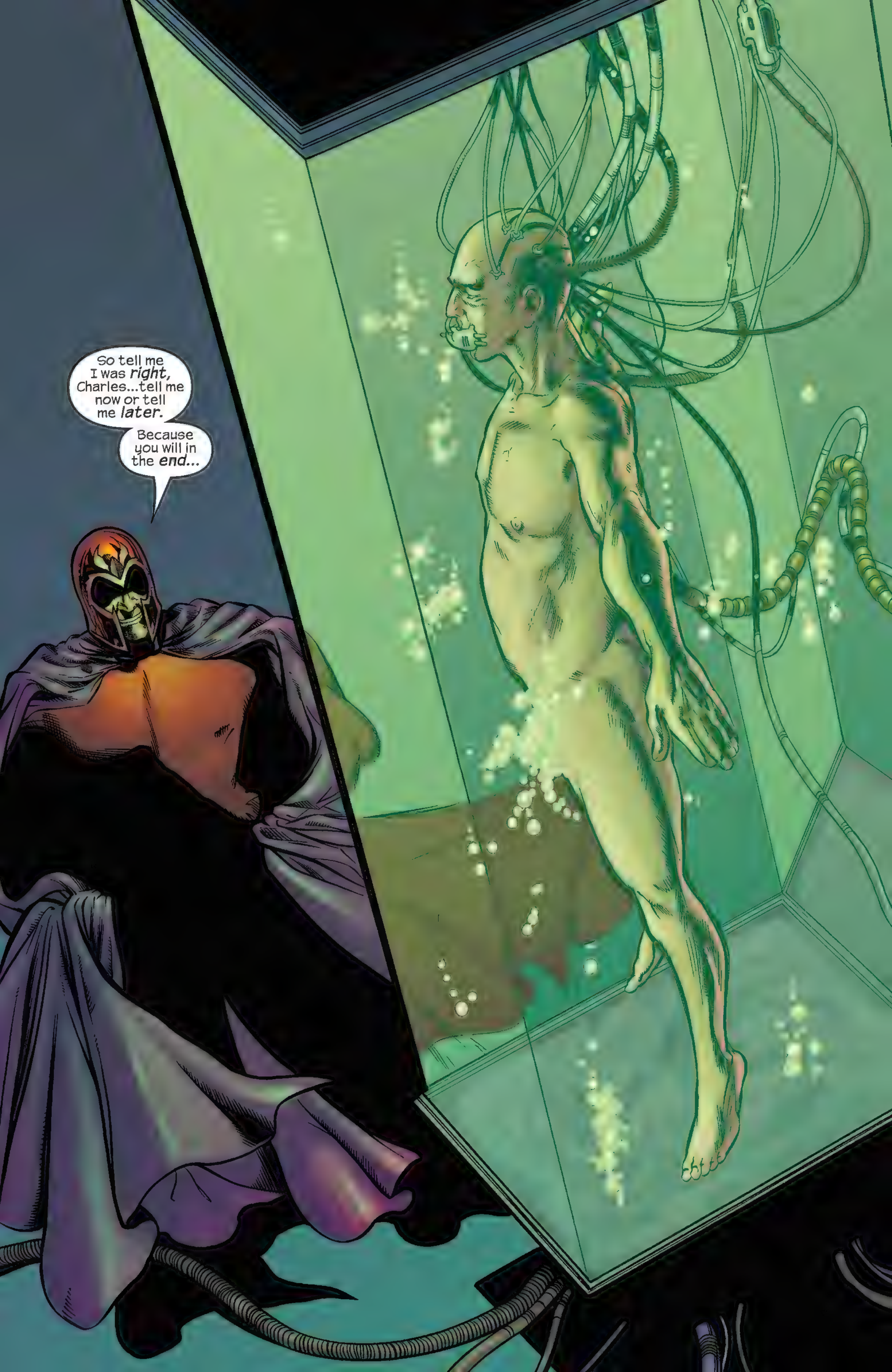


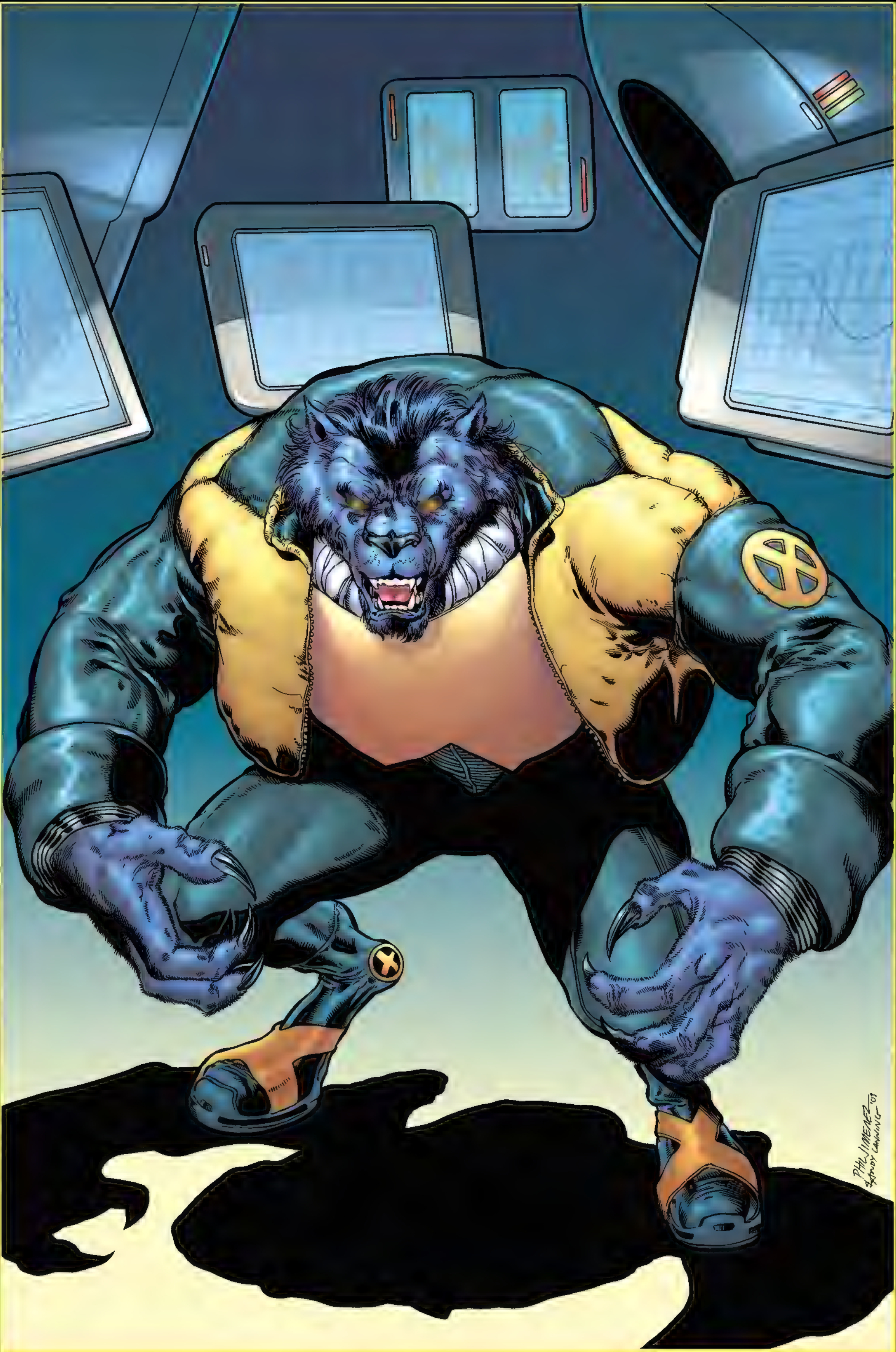

WE WILL HAVE NO NEED FOR HUMAN LAWS OR HUMAN OPINIONS.
OR HUMAN BEINGS.


LATER THAT EVENING...
I'm pushing the humans along with my *mind*-- the whip's just for show...
Push me around with a whip anytime...
SLLTHHT!
KILL THE HUMAN FLATSCAN!
GRRKK
Only a total *drug addict* could think this up.
Magneto really *hates* people, doesn't he?
This is *terrible.*
This is *terrible.*

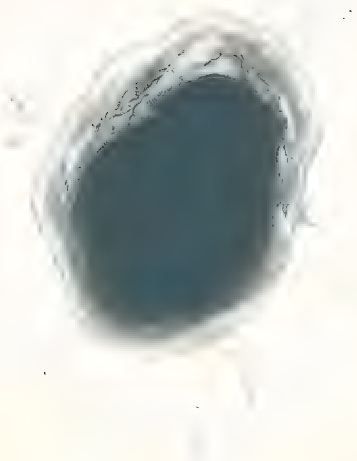

I wish I could exterminate them *all*...all at once, but...
...one can hardly expect *mutants* to clean the sewers or carry away our trash in the midst of this great transition to a *new* way of life.
These creatures have no *desire* to integrate, Charles. They never have!
I worked it all out. Waiting.
"Meditating".
Your pacifist *"Institute"* is where I train my *soldiers* now... a place for young warriors to be indoctrinated with a burning hatred and contempt for the gentically impure.
You *remember* the Institute, don't you?
I had to redesign it a little, but it's made *all* the difference...

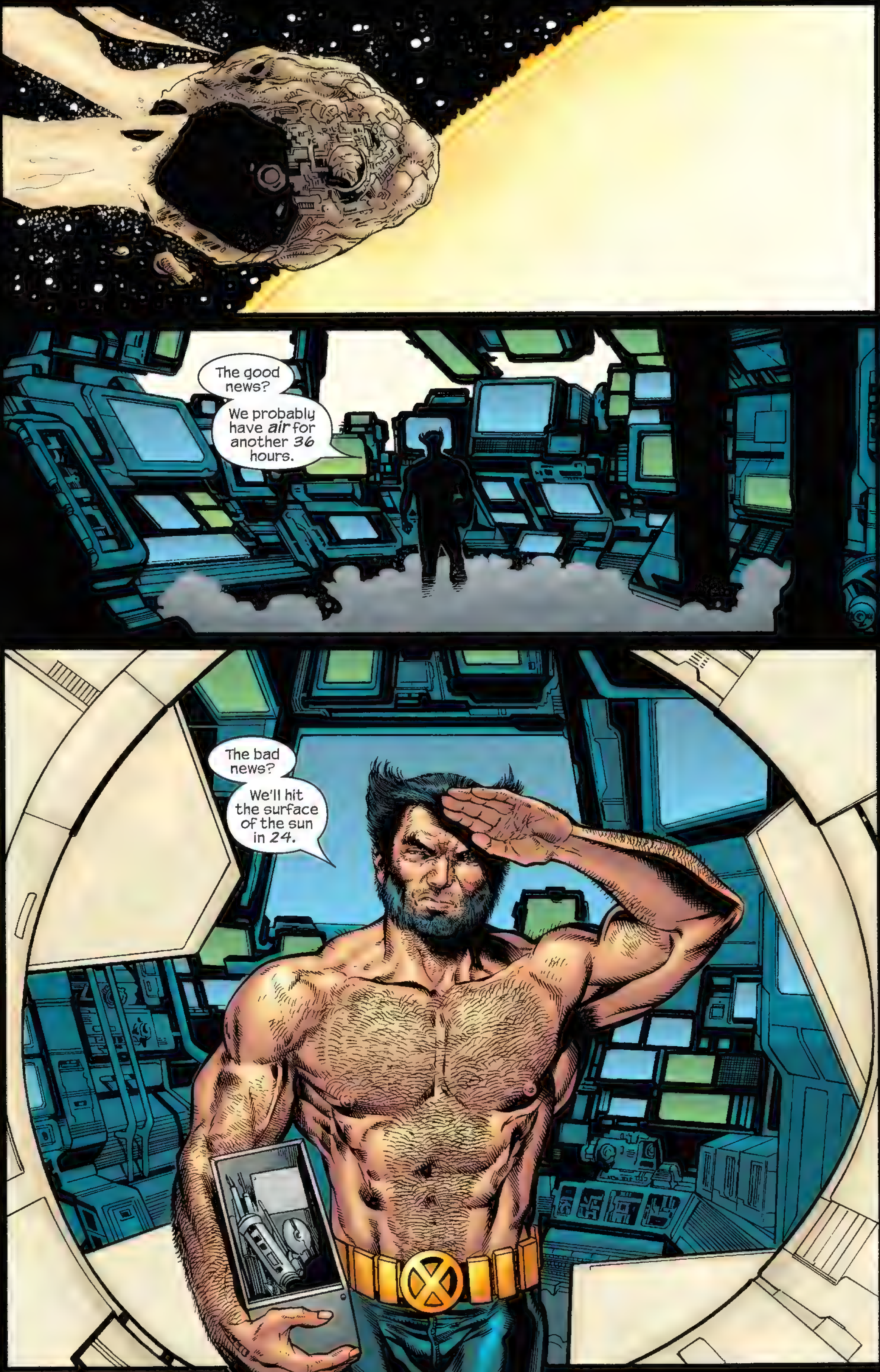


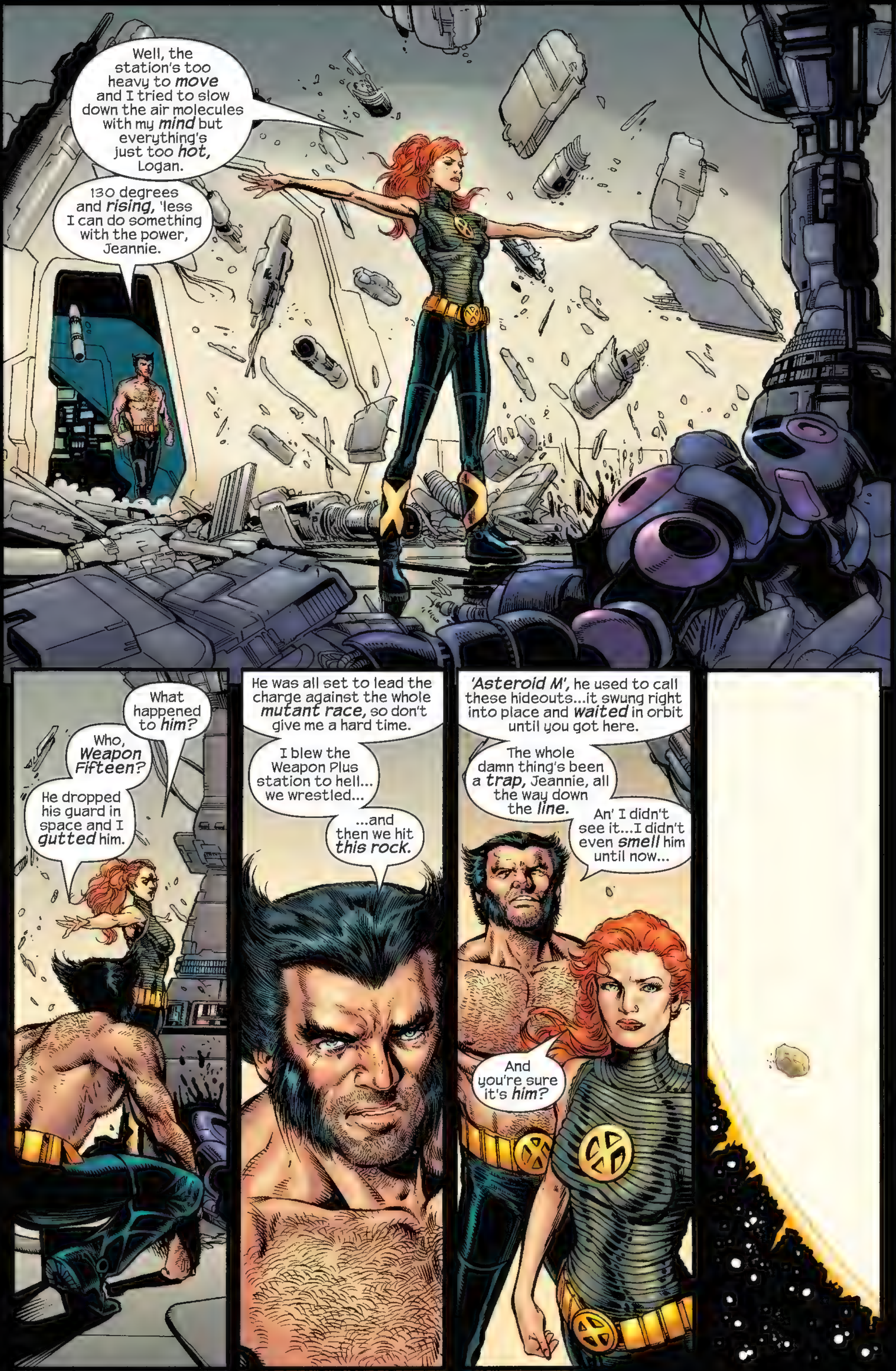

So tell me I was *right,* Charles...tell me now or tell me *later.*
Because you will in the *end...*


PHIL JIMENEZ '03
& ANDY LANNING

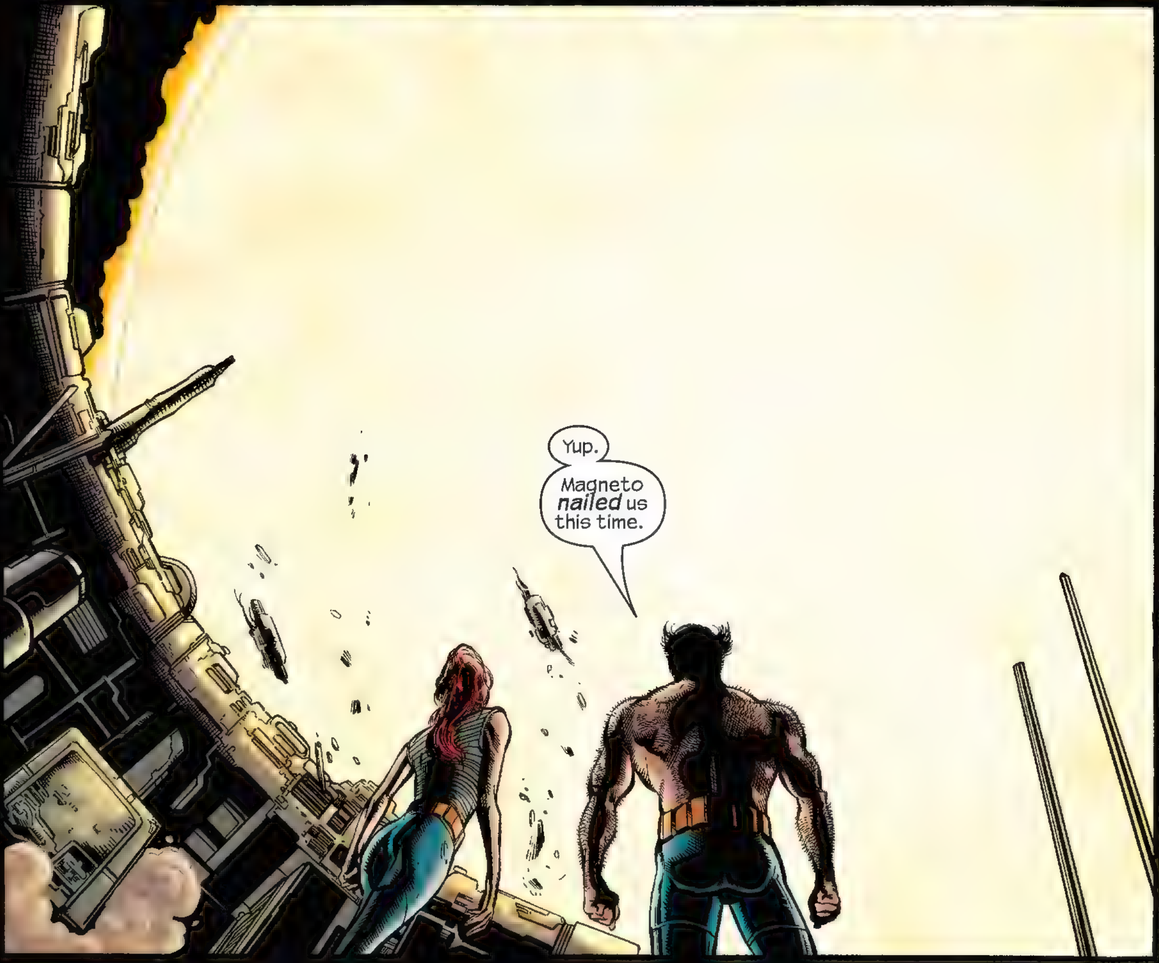
NEW X-MEN #148
"PLANET X PART THREE: SURVIVOR TYPE"




The good news?
We probably have *air* for another *36* hours.
The bad news?
We'll hit the surface of the sun in *24*.

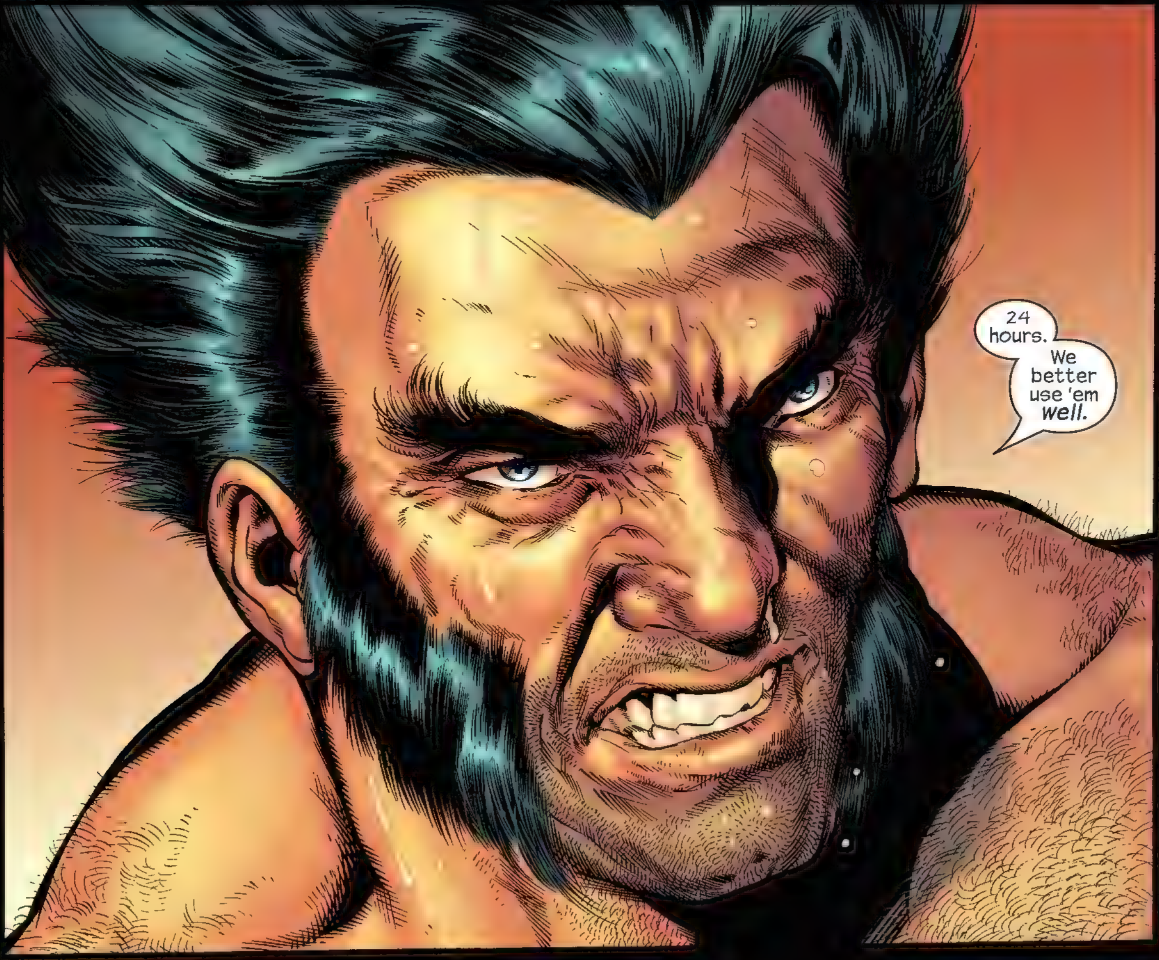

Well, the station's too heavy to *move* and I tried to slow down the air molecules with my *mind* but everything's just too *hot,* Logan.
130 degrees and *rising,* 'less I can do something with the power, Jeannie.
What happened to *him?*
Who, *Weapon Fifteen?*
He dropped his guard in space and I *gutted* him.
He was all set to lead the charge against the whole *mutant race,* so don't give me a hard time.
I blew the Weapon Plus station to hell... we wrestled...
...and then we hit *this rock.*
'Asteroid M', he used to call these hideouts...it swung right into place and *waited* in orbit until you got here.
The whole damn thing's been a *trap,* Jeannie, all the way down the *line.*
An' I didn't see it...I didn't even *smell* him until now...
And you're sure it's *him?*

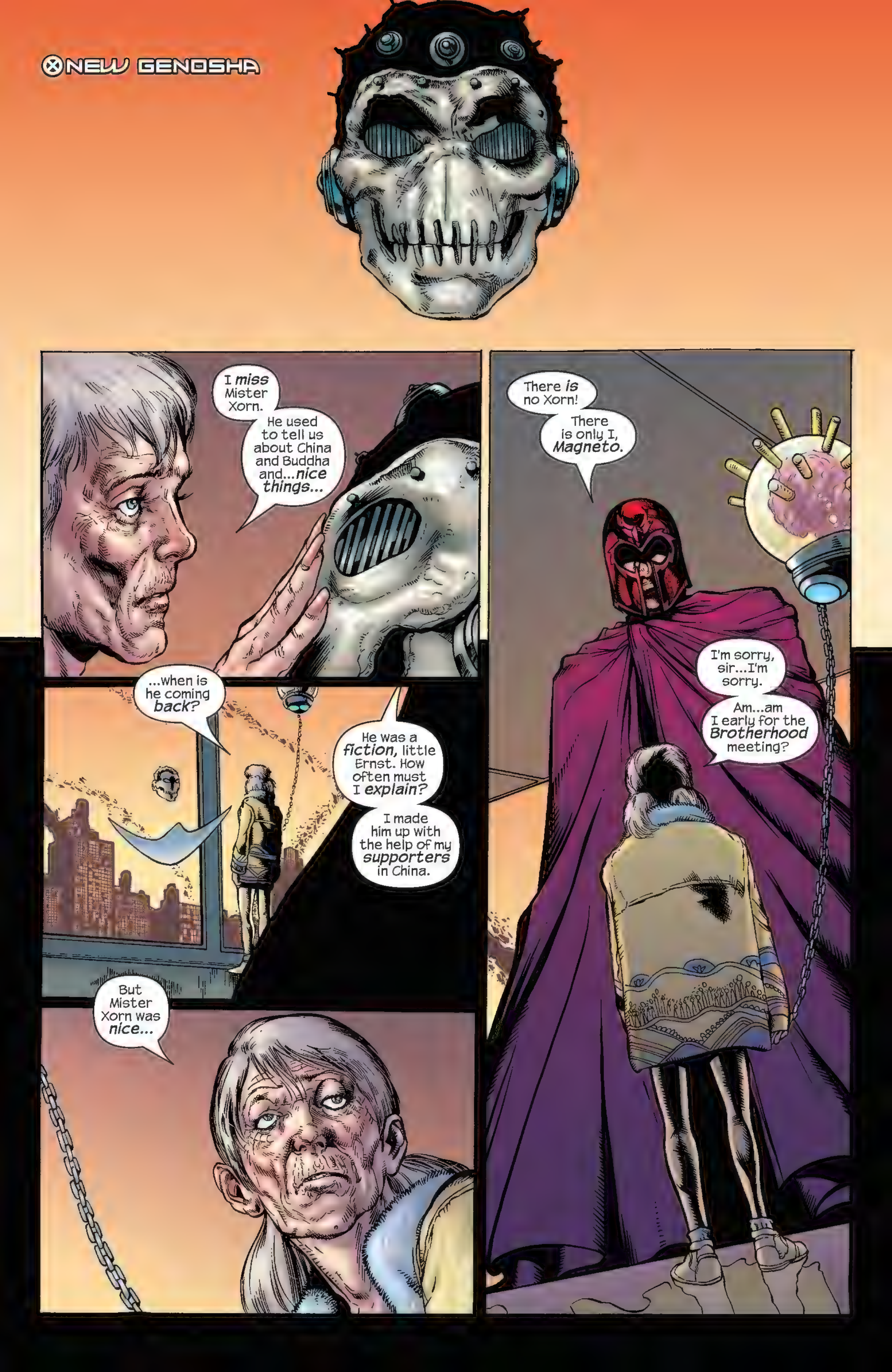
SURVIVOR TYPE

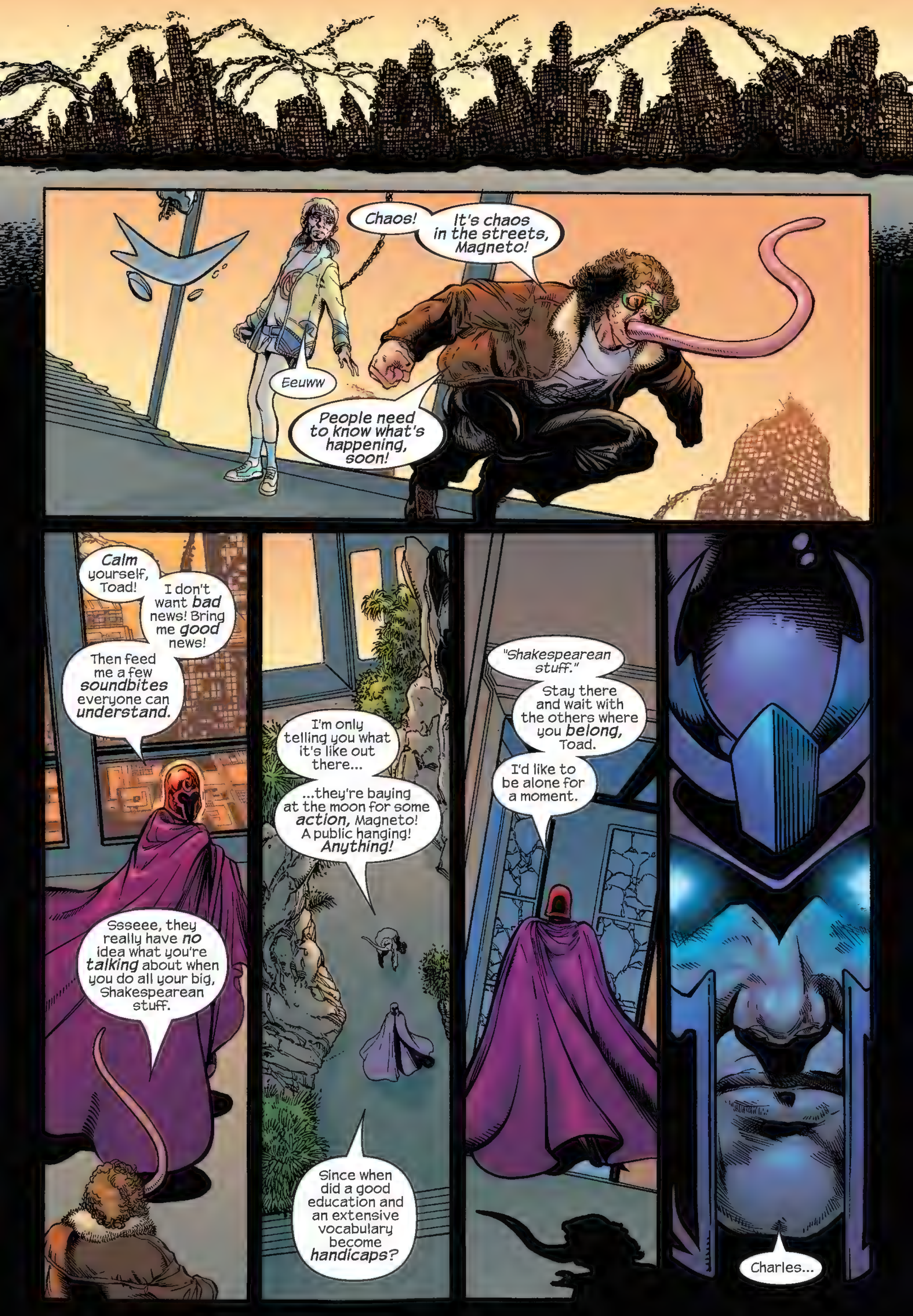

Yup.
Magneto *nailed* us this time.

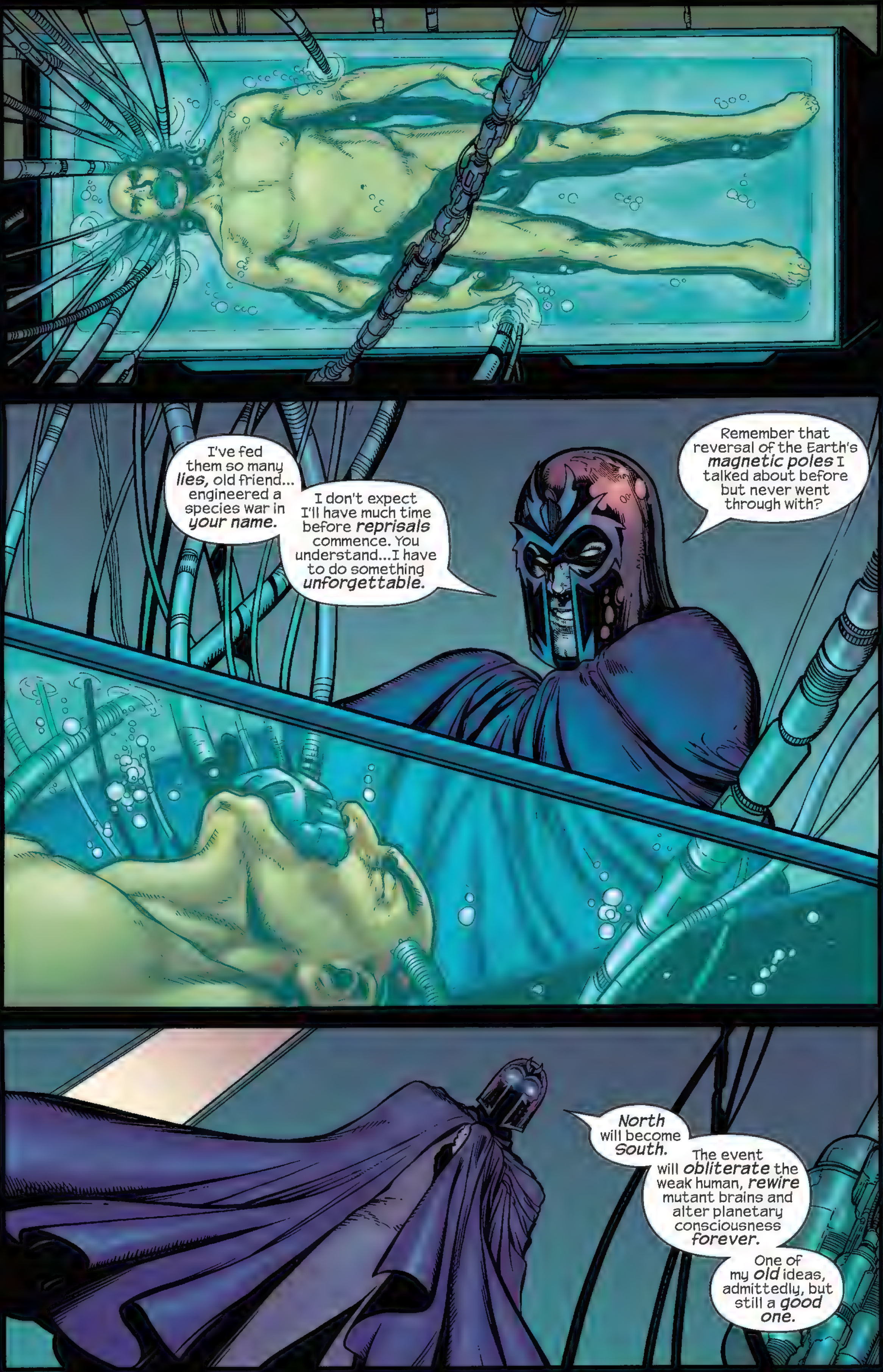
PLANET X

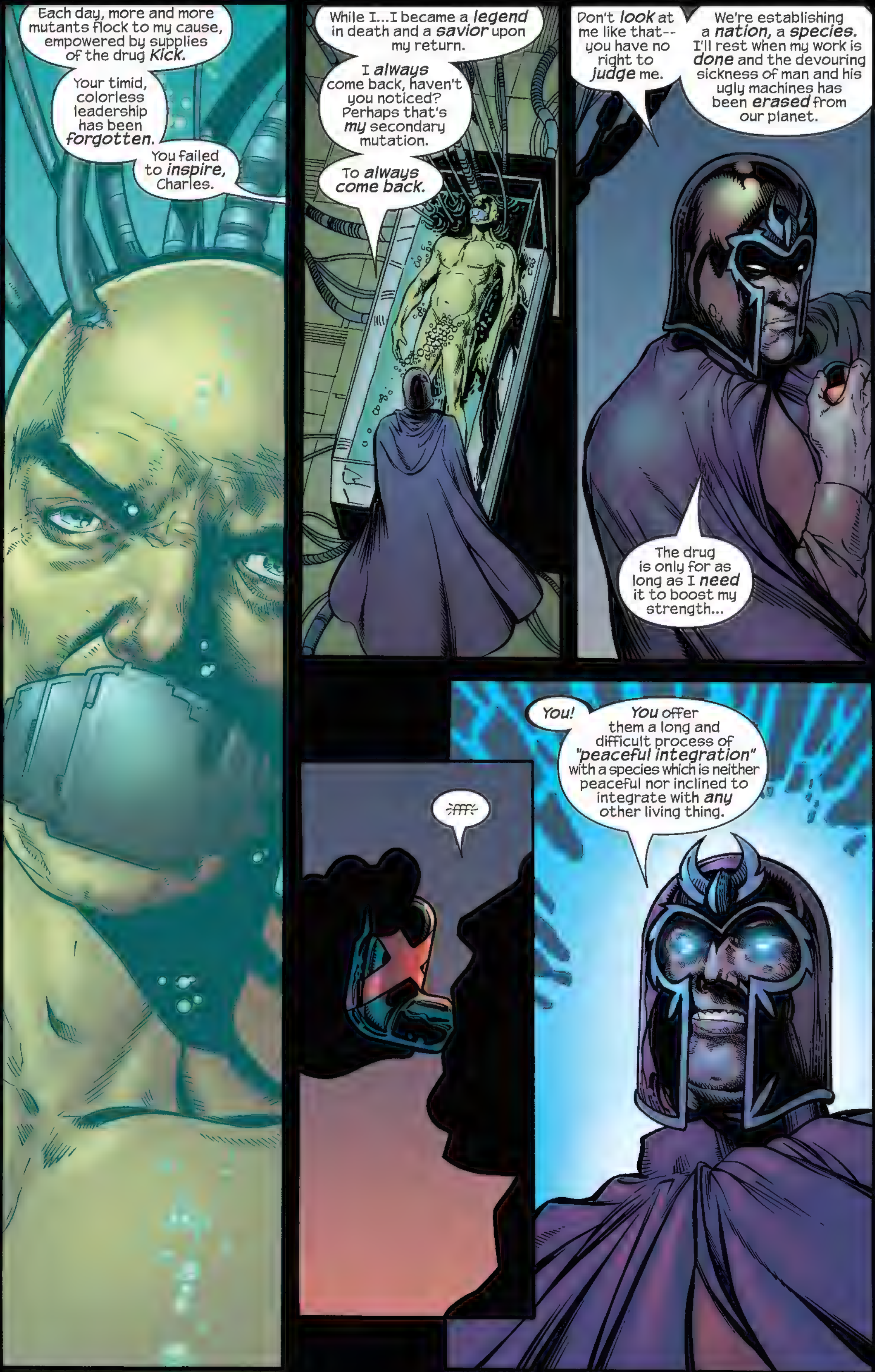
PART 3 OF 5

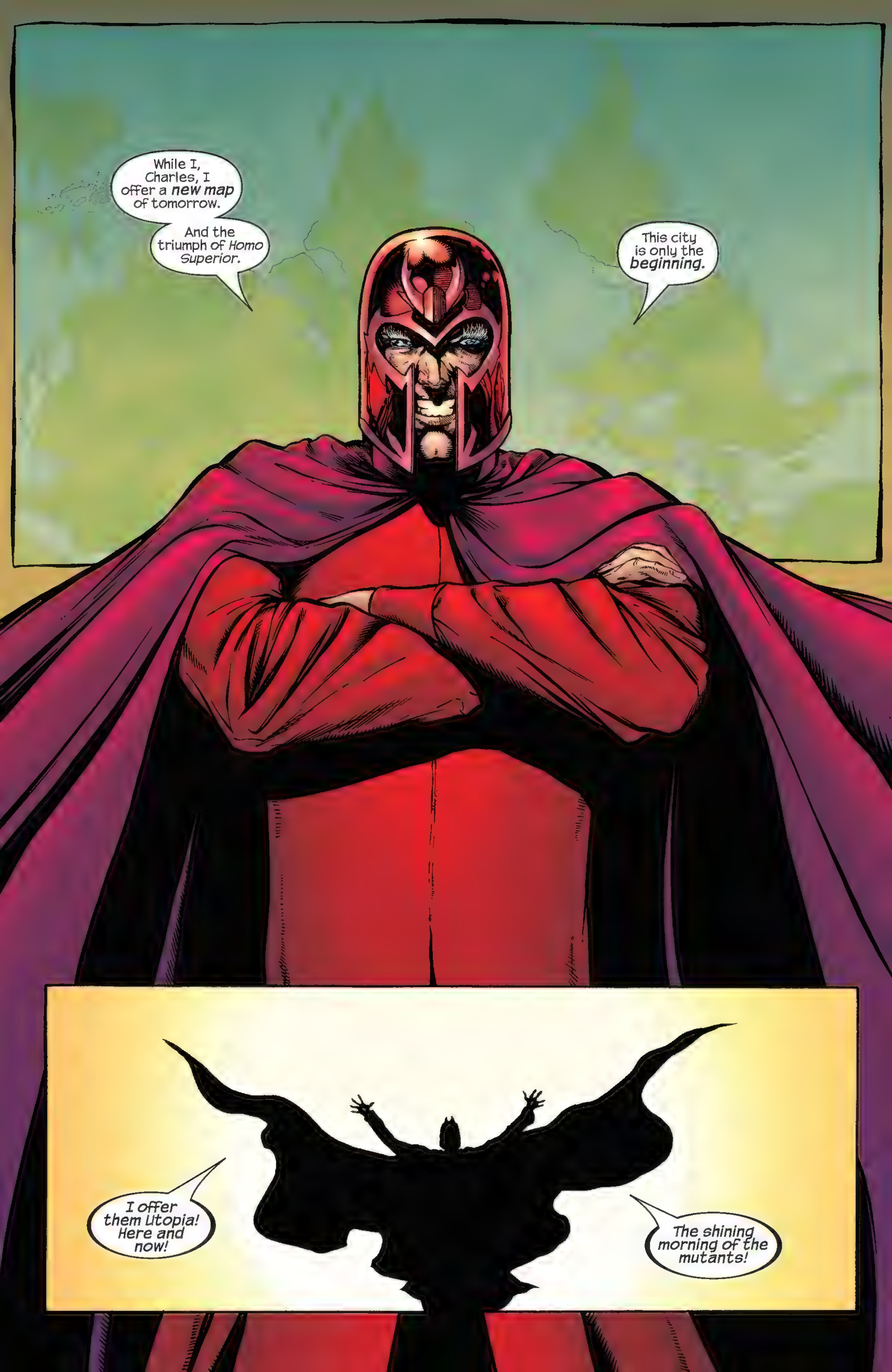

24 hours. We better use 'em *well.*

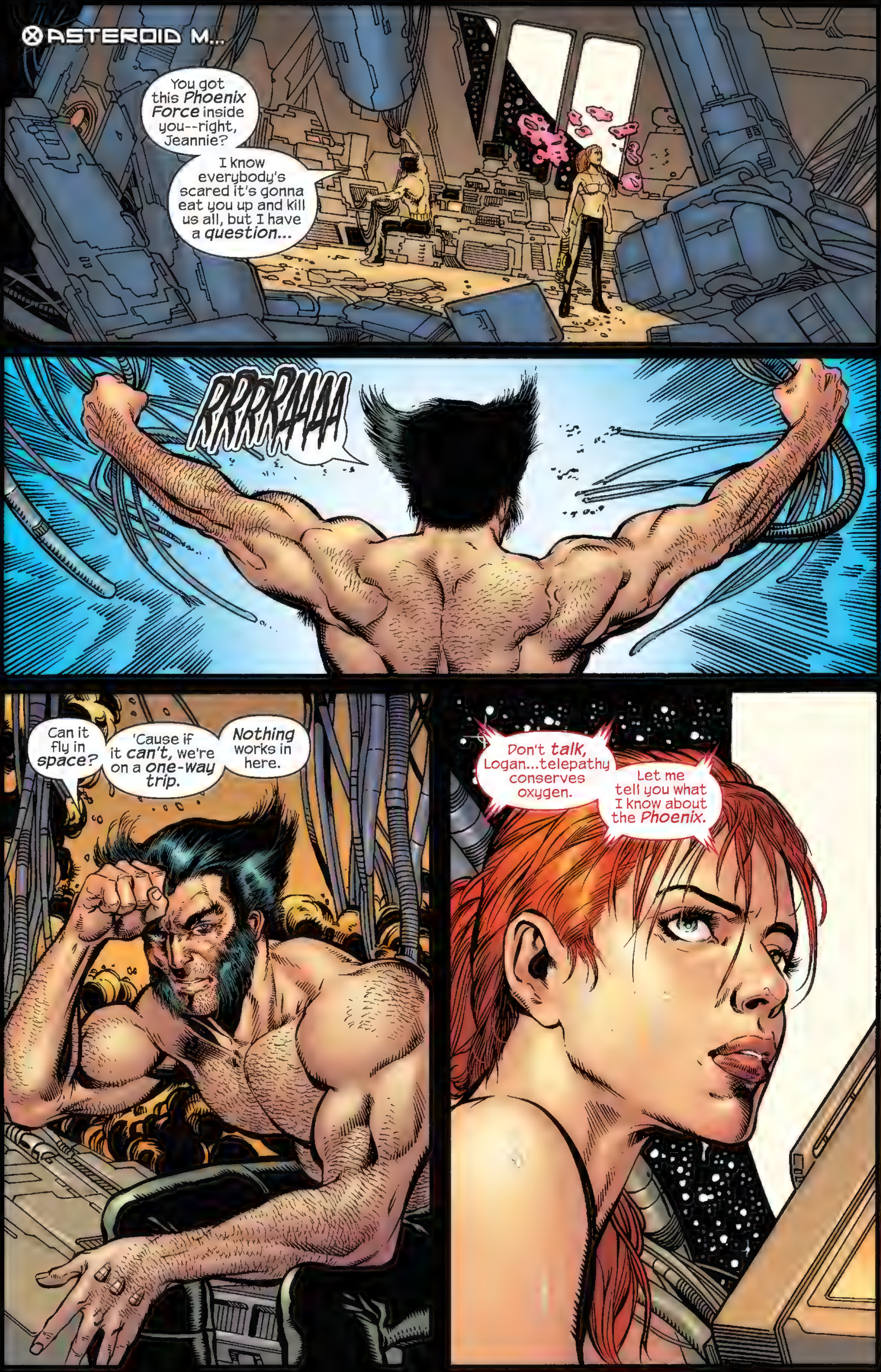

NEW GENOSHA
I *miss* Mister Xorn.
He used to tell us about China and Buddha and...*nice things...*
There *is* no Xorn!
There is only I, *Magneto.*
...when is he coming *back?*
He was a *fiction,* little Ernst. How often must I *explain?*
I made him up with the help of my *supporters* in China.
I'm sorry, sir...I'm sorry.
Am...am I early for the *Brotherhood* meeting?
But Mister Xorn was *nice...*

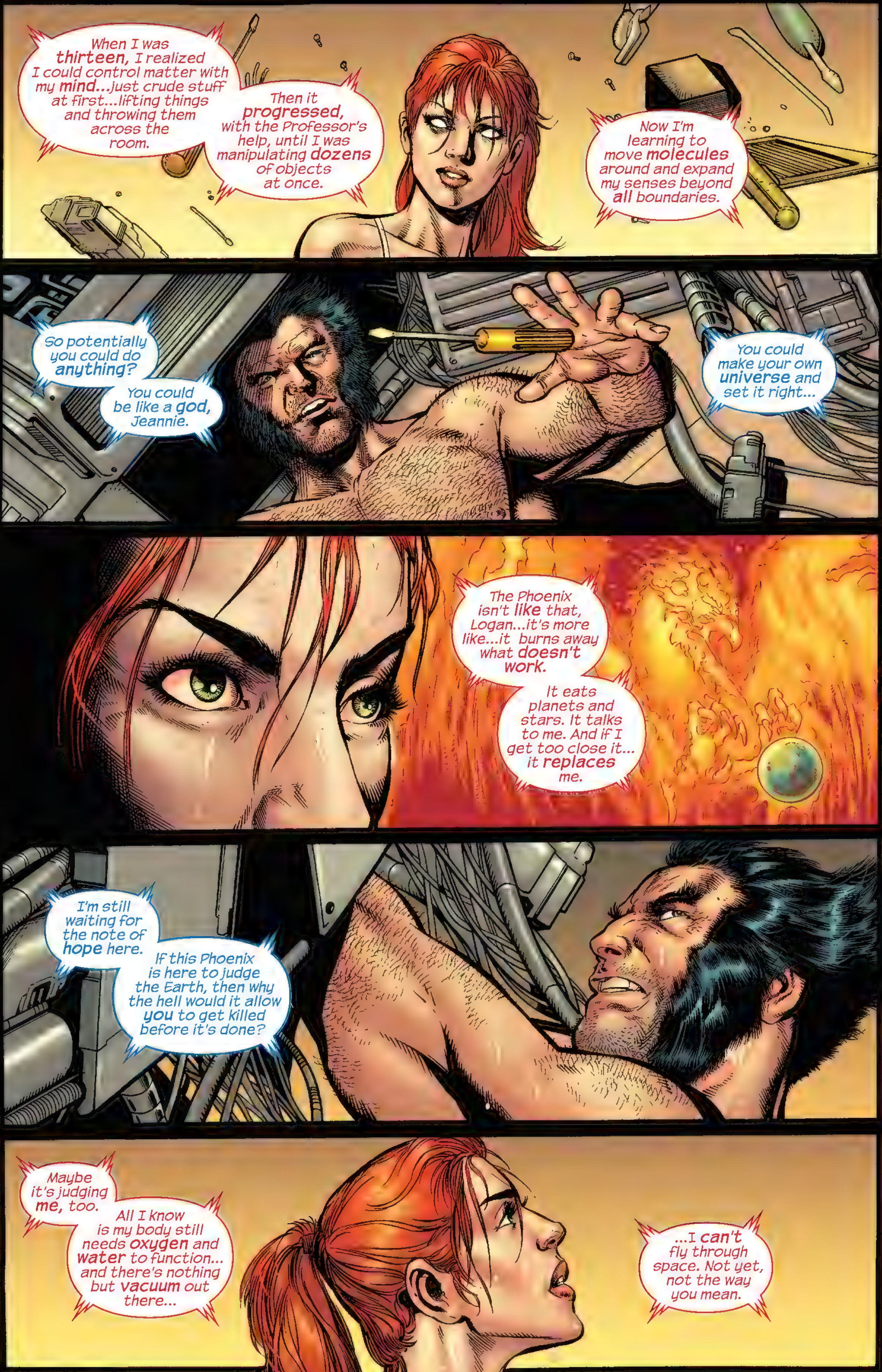

Chaos!
It's chaos in the streets, Magneto!
Eeuww
People need to know what's happening, soon!
Calm yourself, Toad!
I don't want bad news! Bring me good news!
Then feed me a few soundbites everyone can understand.
Ssseee, they really have no idea what you're talking about when you do all your big, Shakespearean stuff.
I'm only telling you what it's like out there...
...they're baying at the moon for some action, Magneto! A public hanging! Anything!
Since when did a good education and an extensive vocabulary become handicaps?
"Shakespearean stuff."
Stay there and wait with the others where you belong, Toad.
I'd like to be alone for a moment.
Charles...

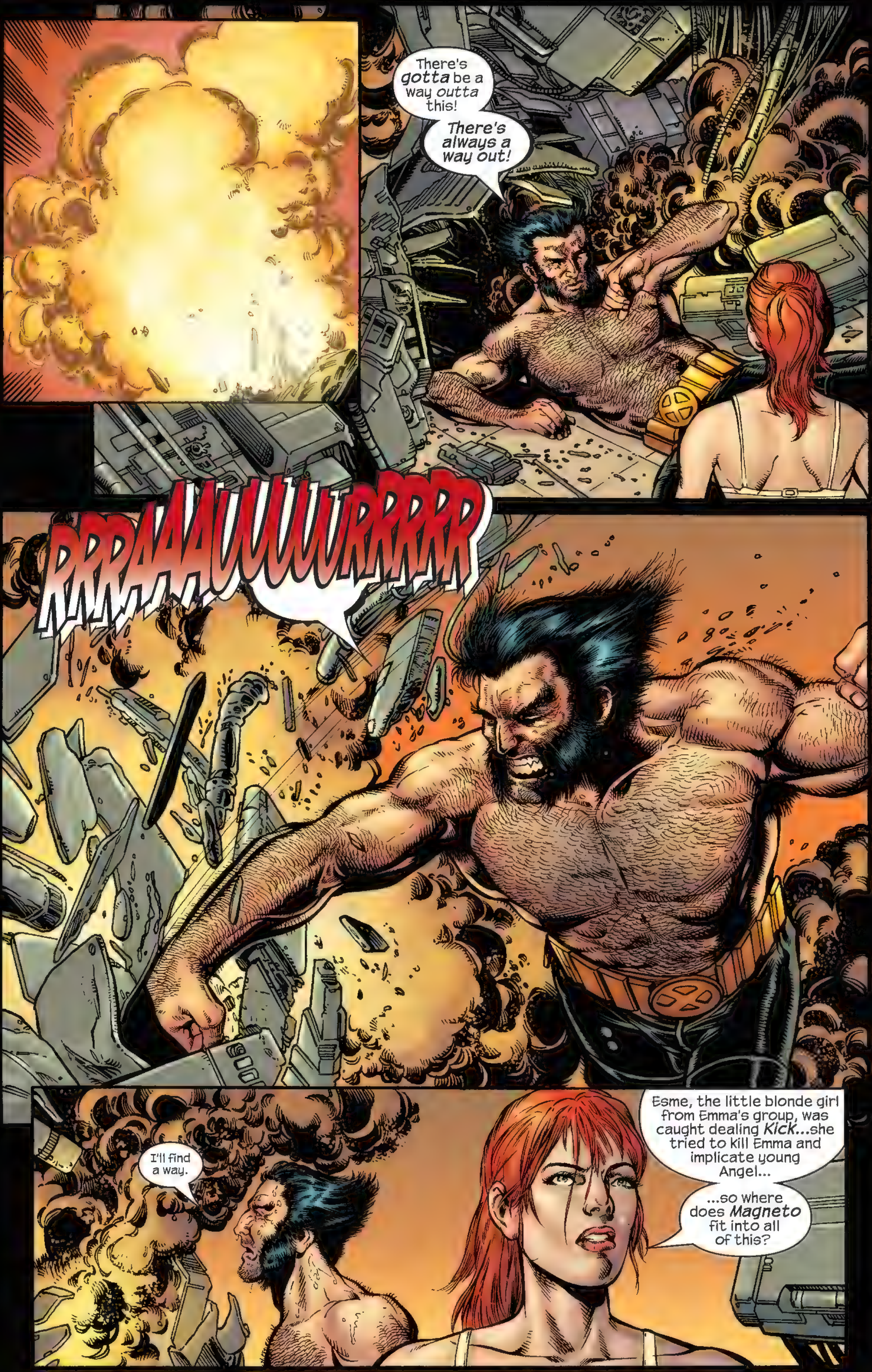

I've fed them so many *lies,* old friend... engineered a species war in ***your name.***
I don't expect I'll have much time before ***reprisals*** commence. You understand...I have to do something ***unforgettable.***
Remember that reversal of the Earth's ***magnetic poles*** I talked about before but never went through with?
North will become *South.*
The event will ***obliterate*** the weak human, ***rewire*** mutant brains and alter planetary consciousness ***forever.***
One of my ***old*** ideas, admittedly, but still a ***good one.***

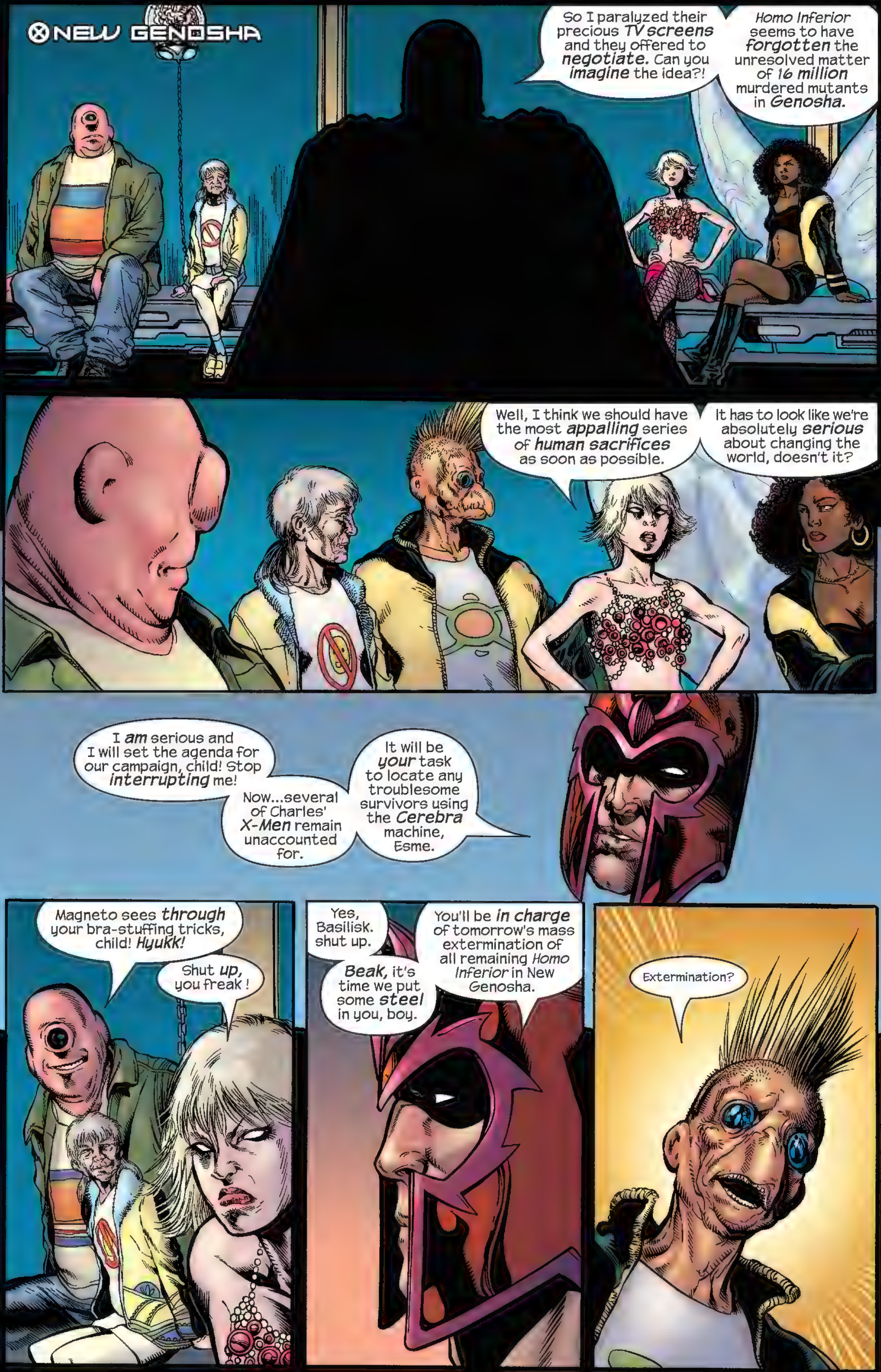

Each day, more and more mutants flock to my cause, empowered by supplies of the drug *Kick.*
Your timid, colorless leadership has been *forgotten.*
You failed to *inspire,* Charles.
While I...I became a *legend* in death and a *savior* upon my return.
I *always* come back, haven't you noticed? Perhaps that's *my* secondary mutation.
To *always come back.*
Don't *look* at me like that-- you have no right to *judge* me.
We're establishing a *nation,* a *species.* I'll rest when my work is *done* and the devouring sickness of man and his ugly machines has been *erased* from our planet.
The drug is only for as long as I *need* it to boost my strength...
ffff
You!
You offer them a long and difficult process of *"peaceful integration"* with a species which is neither peaceful nor inclined to integrate with *any* other living thing.

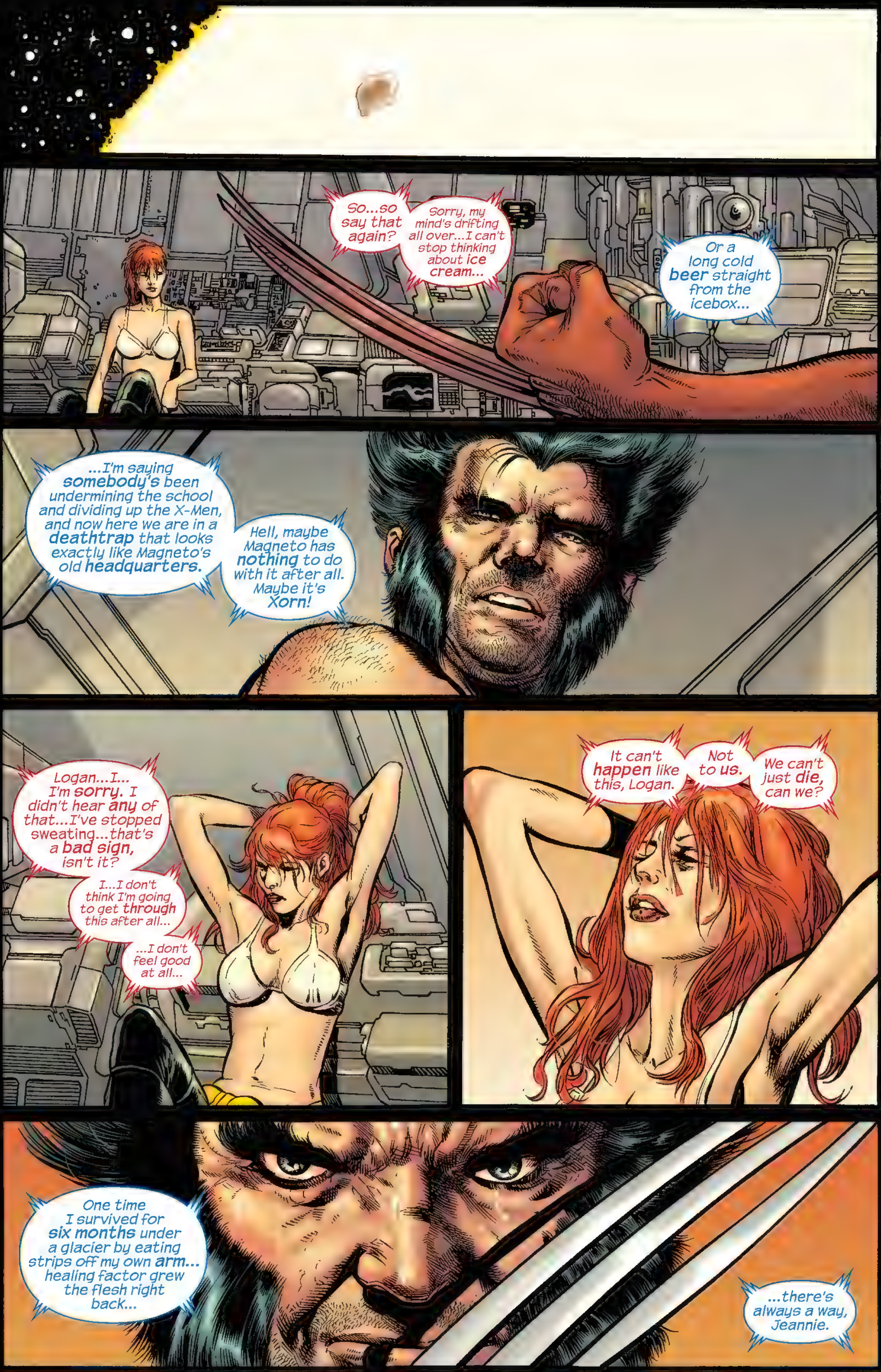

While I, Charles, I offer a ***new map*** of tomorrow.
And the triumph of *Homo Superior*.
This city is only the ***beginning.***
I offer them Utopia! Here and now!
The shining morning of the mutants!

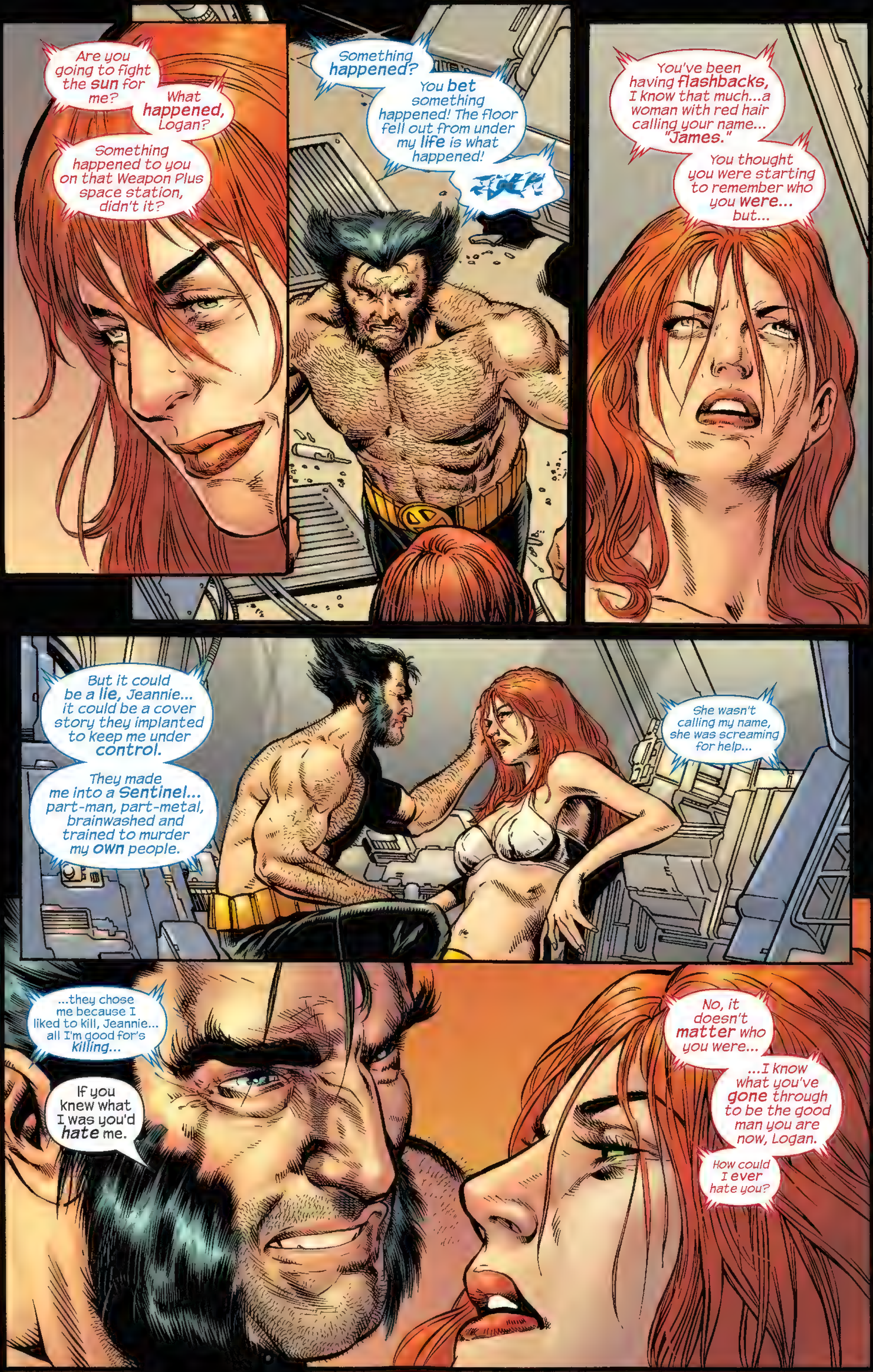

ASTEROID M...
You got this Phoenix Force inside you--right, Jeannie?
I know everybody's scared it's gonna eat you up and kill us all, but I have a question...
RRRRAAAA
Can it fly in space?
'Cause if it can't, we're on a one-way trip.
Nothing works in here.
Don't talk, Logan...telepathy conserves oxygen.
Let me tell you what I know about the Phoenix.

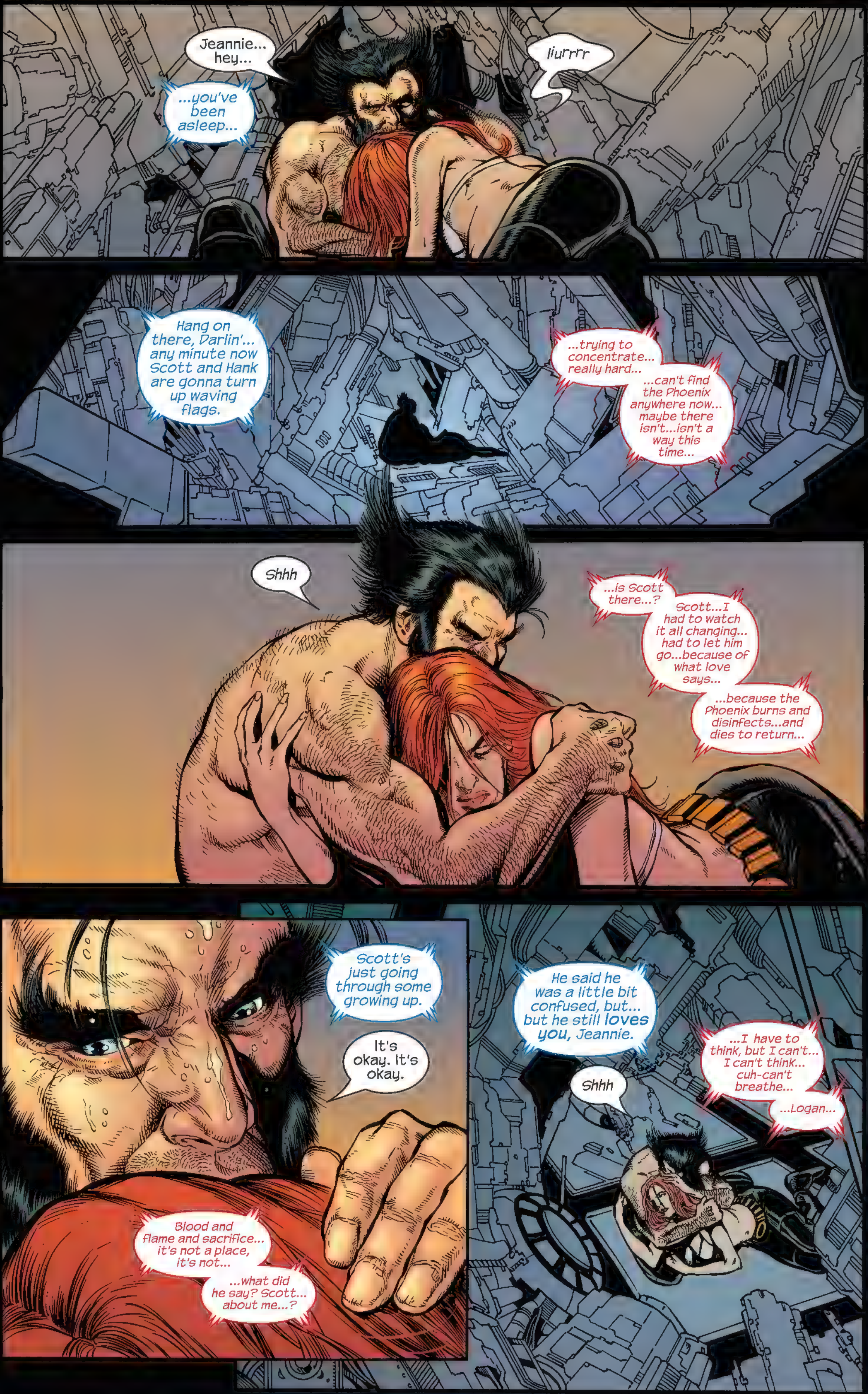

When I was **thirteen,** I realized I could control matter with my **mind...**just crude stuff at first...lifting things and throwing them across the room.
Then it **progressed,** with the Professor's help, until I was manipulating **dozens** of objects at once.
Now I'm learning to move **molecules** around and expand my senses beyond **all** boundaries.
So potentially you could do **anything?**
You could be like a **god,** Jeannie.
You could make your own **universe** and set it right...
The Phoenix isn't **like** that, Logan...it's more like...it burns away what **doesn't work.**
It eats planets and stars. It talks to me. And if I get too close it... it **replaces** me.
I'm still waiting for the note of **hope** here.
If this Phoenix is here to judge the Earth, then why the hell would it allow **you** to get killed before it's done?
Maybe it's judging **me,** too.
All I know is my body still needs **oxygen** and **water** to function... and there's nothing but **vacuum** out there...
...I **can't** fly through space. Not yet, not the way you mean.

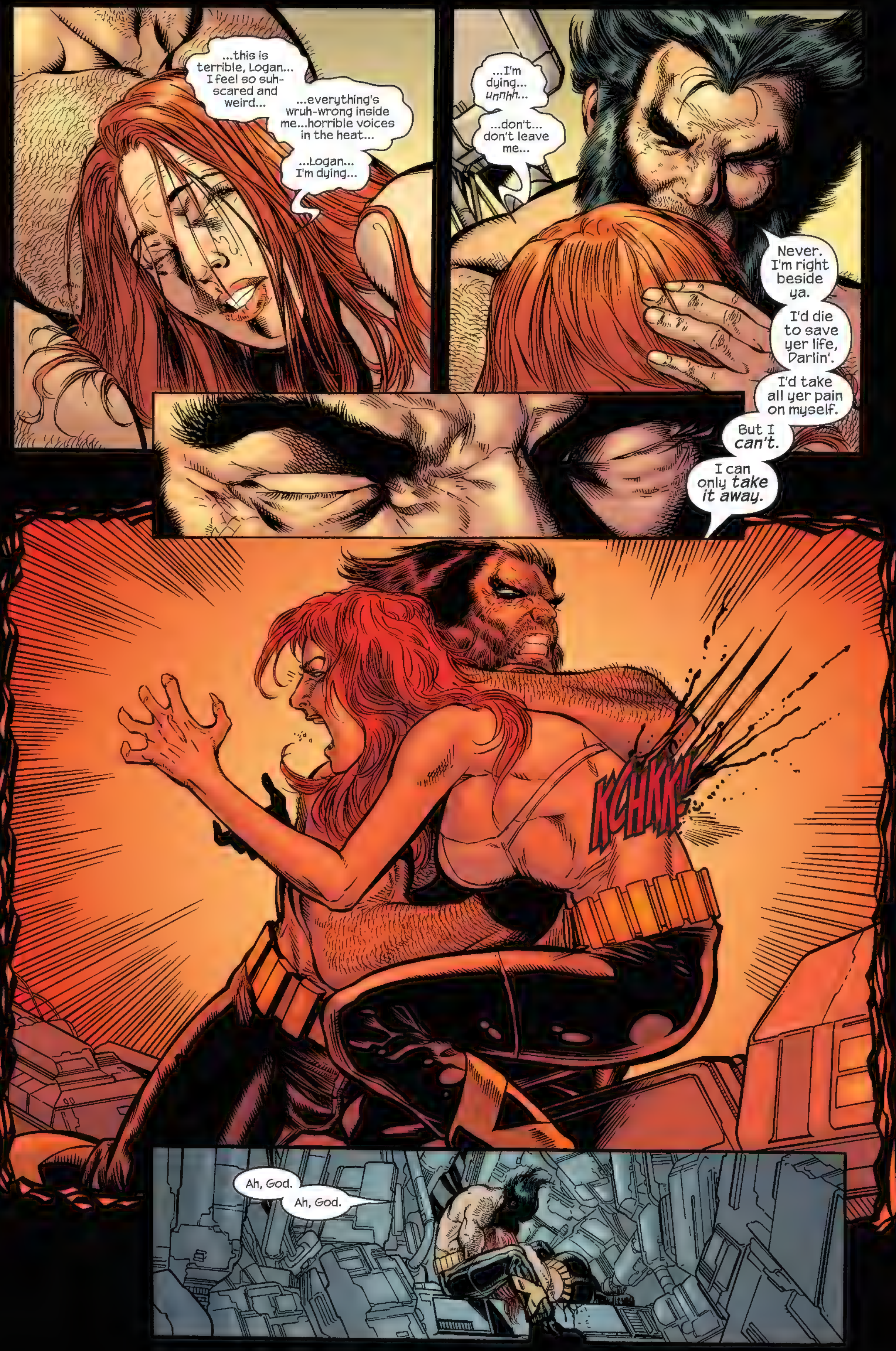

There's gotta be a way outta this!
There's always a way out!
RRRAAAUUUURRRRR
I'll find a way.
Esme, the little blonde girl from Emma's group, was caught dealing Kick...she tried to kill Emma and implicate young Angel...
...so where does Magneto fit into all of this?

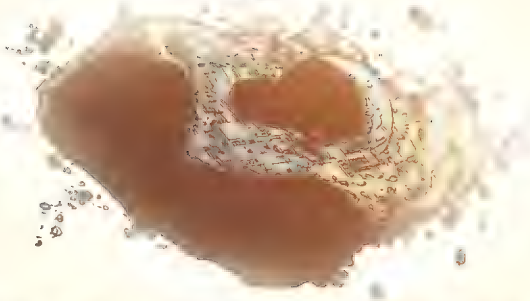

NEW GENOSHA
So I paralyzed their precious *TV screens* and they offered to *negotiate*. Can you *imagine* the idea?!
Homo Inferior seems to have *forgotten* the unresolved matter of *16 million* murdered mutants in *Genosha.*
Well, I think we should have the most *appalling* series of *human sacrifices* as soon as possible.
It has to look like we're absolutely *serious* about changing the world, doesn't it?
I *am* serious and I will set the agenda for our campaign, child! Stop *interrupting* me!
Now...several of Charles' *X-Men* remain unaccounted for.
It will be *your* task to locate any troublesome survivors using the *Cerebra* machine, Esme.
Magneto sees *through* your bra-stuffing tricks, child! *Hyukk!*
Shut *up*, you freak!
Yes, Basilisk. shut up.
Beak, it's time we put some *steel* in you, boy.
You'll be *in charge* of tomorrow's mass extermination of all remaining *Homo Inferior* in New Genosha.
Extermination?

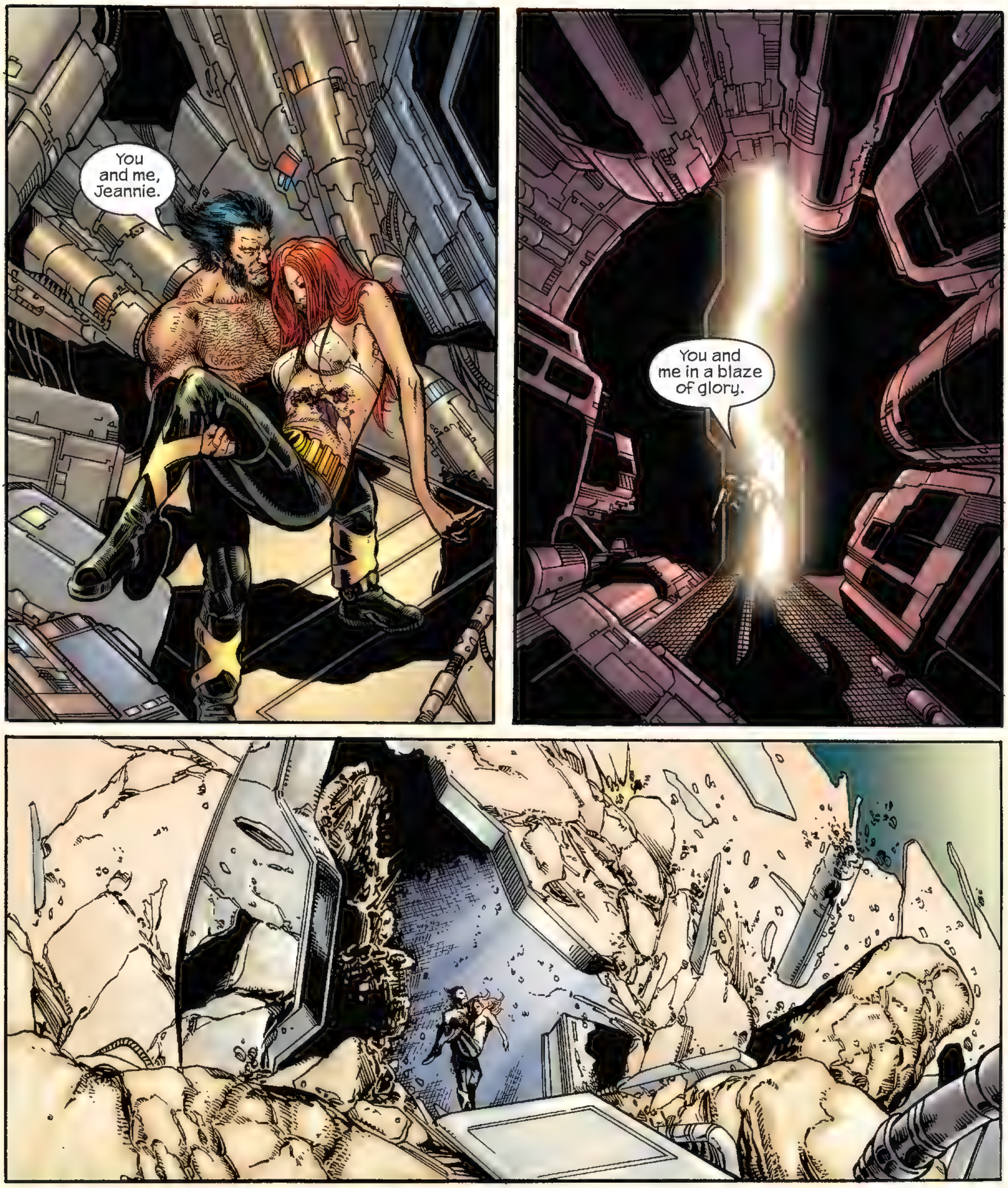

So...so say that again?
Sorry, my mind's drifting all over...I can't stop thinking about ice cream...
Or a long cold beer straight from the icebox...
...I'm saying somebody's been undermining the school and dividing up the X-Men, and now here we are in a deathtrap that looks exactly like Magneto's old headquarters.
Hell, maybe Magneto has nothing to do with it after all. Maybe it's Xorn!
Logan...I... I'm sorry. I didn't hear any of that...I've stopped sweating...that's a bad sign, isn't it?
I...I don't think I'm going to get through this after all...
...I don't feel good at all...
It can't happen like this, Logan.
Not to us.
We can't just die, can we?
One time I survived for six months under a glacier by eating strips off my own arm... healing factor grew the flesh right back...
...there's always a way, Jeannie.

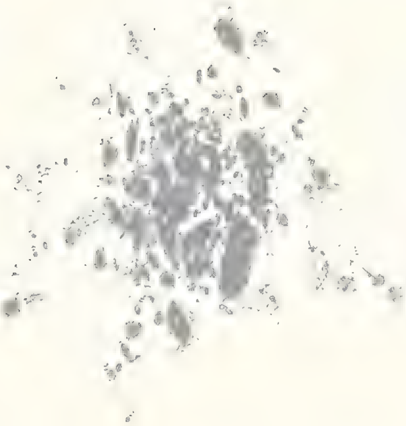

Are you going to fight the **sun** for me?
What **happened,** Logan?
Something happened to you on that Weapon Plus space station, didn't it?
Something **happened?**
You **bet** something happened! The floor fell out from under my **life** is what happened!
You've been having **flashbacks,** I know that much...a woman with red hair calling your name... **"James."**
You thought you were starting to remember who you **were...** but...
But it could be a **lie,** Jeannie... it could be a cover story they implanted to keep me under **control.**
They made me into a **Sentinel...** part-man, part-metal, brainwashed and trained to murder my **own** people.
She wasn't calling my name, she was screaming for help...
...they chose me because I liked to kill, Jeannie... all I'm good for's *killing...*
If you knew what I was you'd ***hate*** me.
No, it doesn't **matter** who you were...
...I know what you've **gone** through to be the good man you are now, Logan.
How could I ever hate you?


Jeannie... hey...
...you've been asleep...
Iiurrrr
Hang on there, Darlin'... any minute now Scott and Hank are gonna turn up waving flags.
...trying to concentrate... really hard...
...can't find the Phoenix anywhere now... maybe there isn't...isn't a way this time...
Shhh
...is Scott there...?
Scott...I had to watch it all changing... had to let him go...because of what love says...
...because the Phoenix burns and disinfects...and dies to return...
Scott's just going through some growing up.
It's okay. It's okay.
Blood and flame and sacrifice... it's not a place, it's not...
...what did he say? Scott... about me...?
He said he was a little bit confused, but... but he still loves you, Jeannie.
Shhh
...I have to think, but I can't... I can't think... cuh-can't breathe...
...Logan...

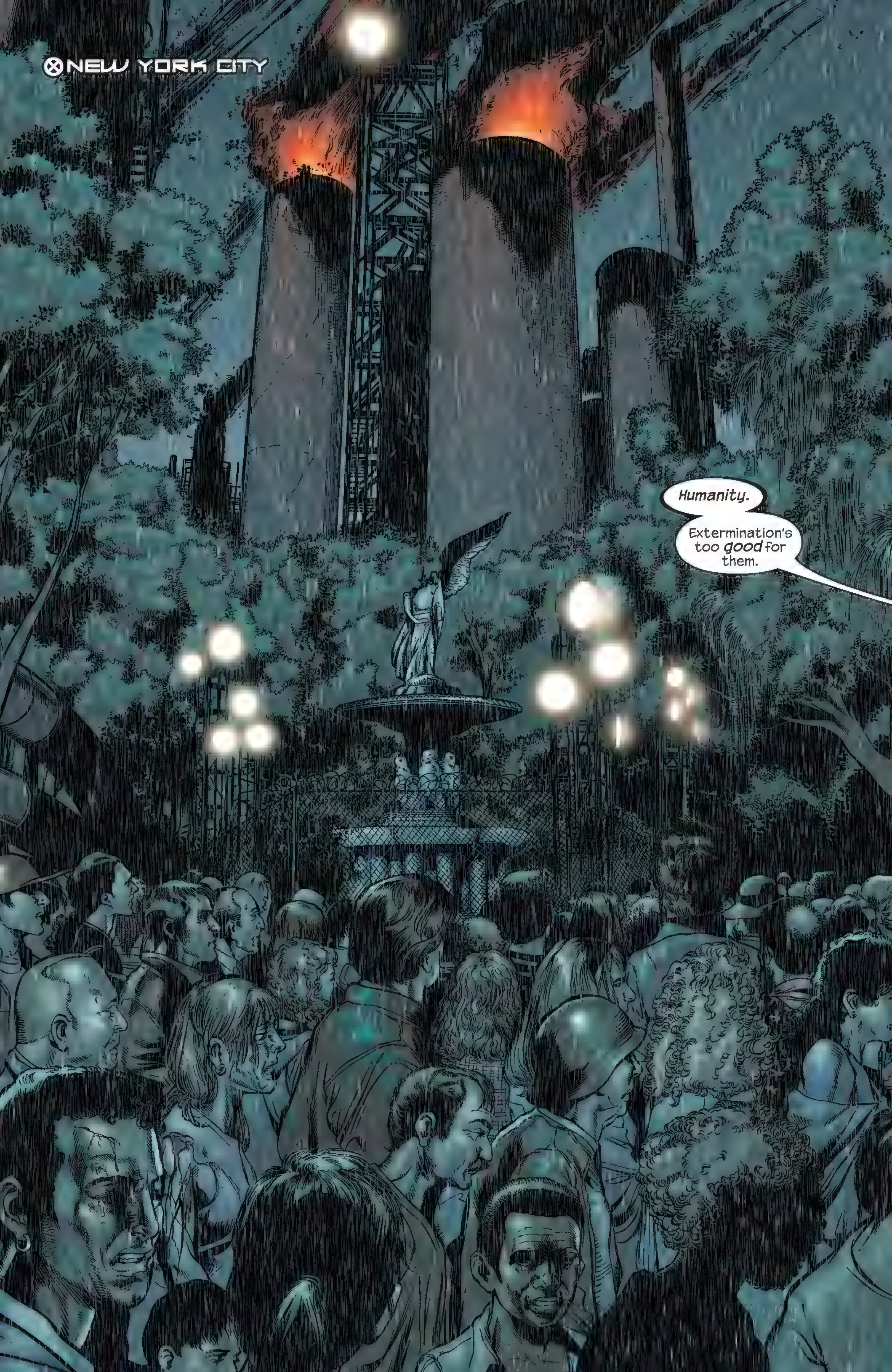

...this is terrible, Logan... I feel so suh-scared and weird...
...everything's wruh-wrong inside me...horrible voices in the heat...
...Logan... I'm dying...
...I'm dying... unnhh...
...don't... don't leave me...
Never. I'm right beside ya.
I'd die to save yer life, Darlin'.
I'd take all yer pain on myself.
But I *can't.*
I can only *take it away.*
KCHKK!
Ah, God.
Ah, God.

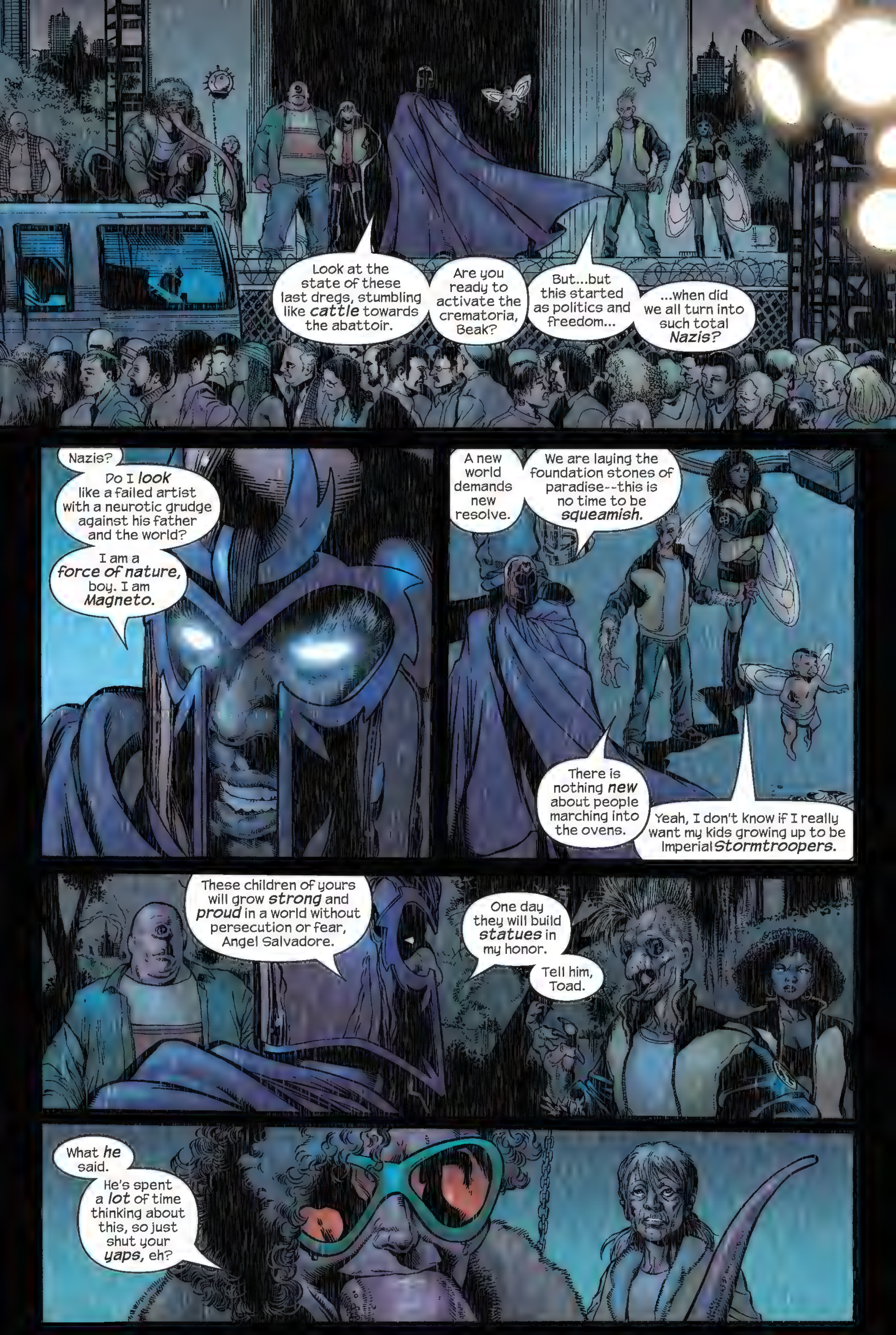


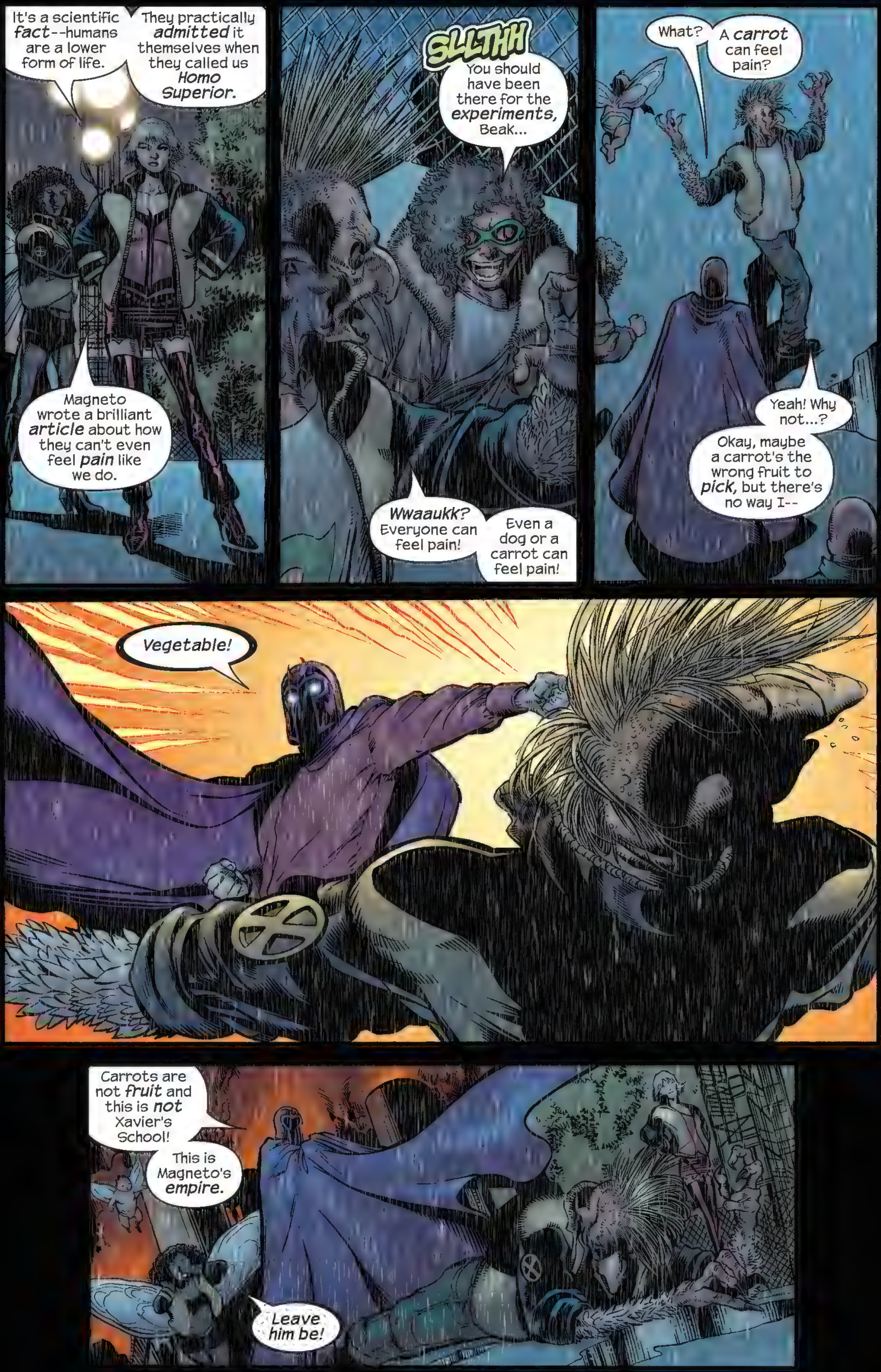

You and me, Jeannie.
You and me in a blaze of glory.

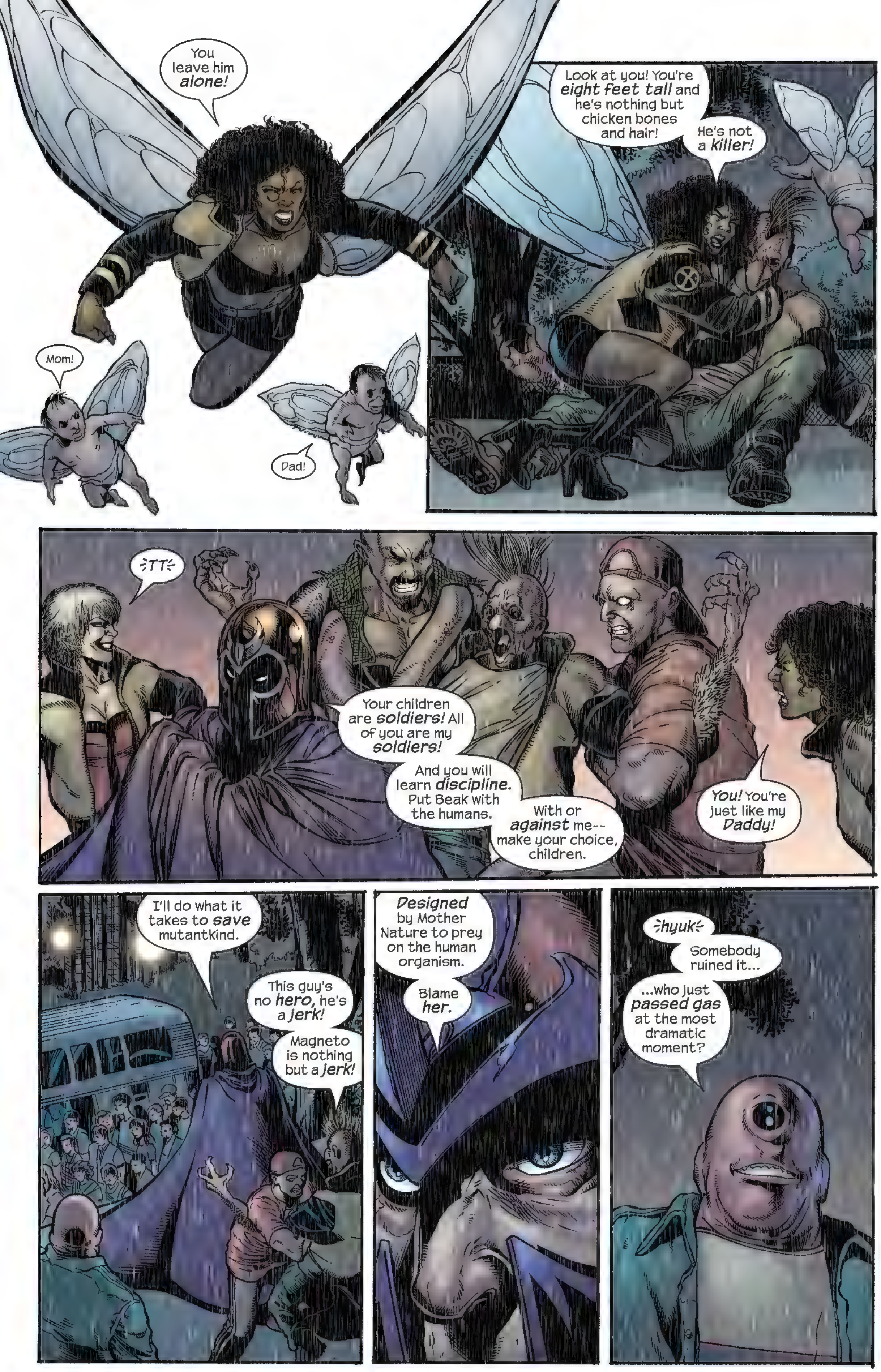


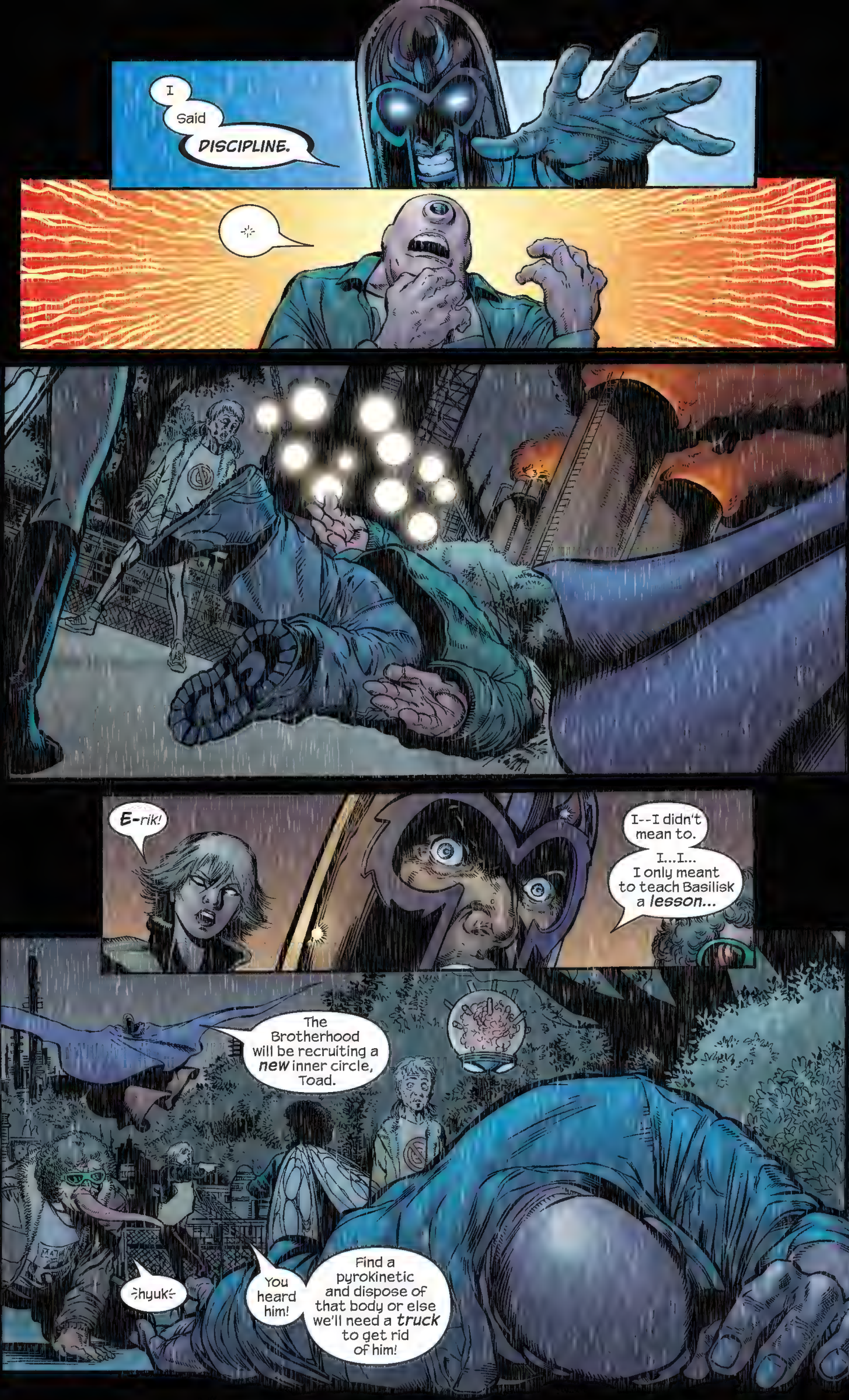
NEW X-MEN #149
"PLANET X PART FOUR: PHOENIX IN DARKNESS"

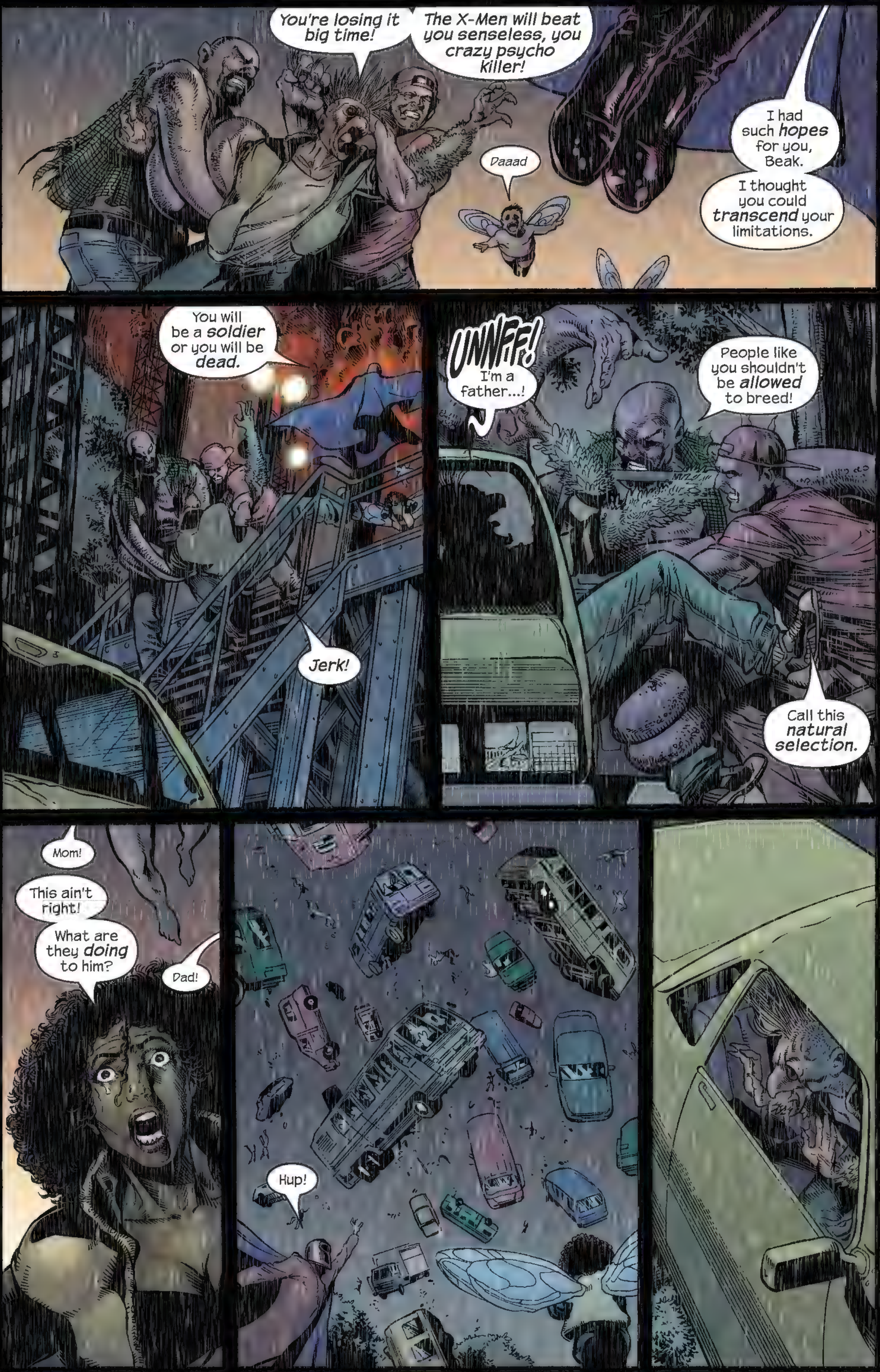

NEW YORK CITY
Humanity.
Extermination's too *good* for them.

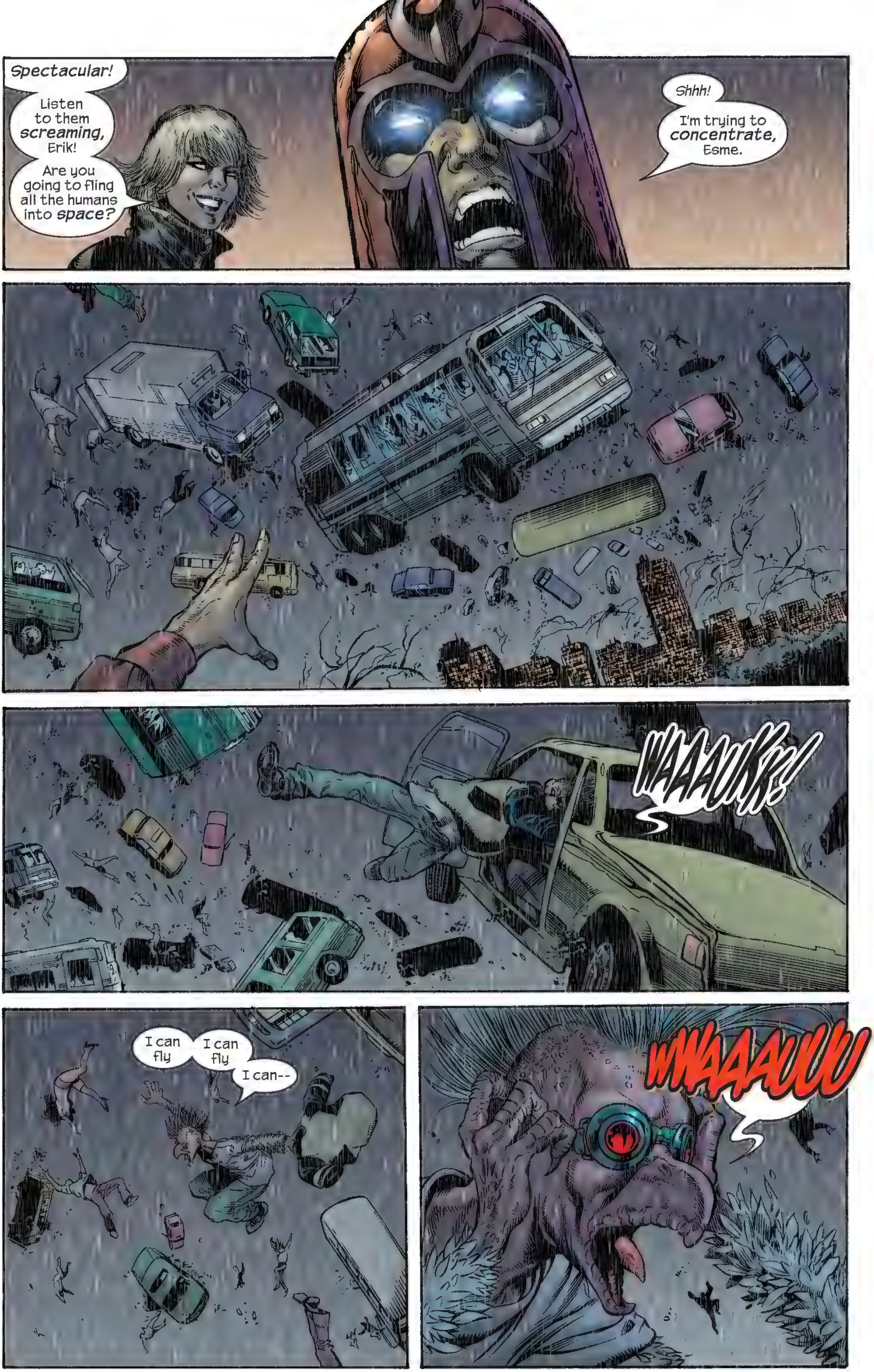

Look at the state of these last dregs, stumbling like *cattle* towards the abattoir.
Are you ready to activate the crematoria, Beak?
But...but this started as politics and freedom...
...when did we all turn into such total *Nazis?*
Nazis?
Do I *look* like a failed artist with a neurotic grudge against his father and the world?
I am a *force of nature,* boy. I am *Magneto.*
A new world demands new resolve.
We are laying the foundation stones of paradise--this is no time to be *squeamish.*
There is nothing *new* about people marching into the ovens.
Yeah, I don't know if I really want my kids growing up to be Imperial *Stormtroopers.*
These children of yours will grow *strong* and *proud* in a world without persecution or fear, Angel Salvadore.
One day they will build *statues* in my honor.
Tell him, Toad.
What *he* said.
He's spent a *lot* of time thinking about this, so just shut your *yaps,* eh?

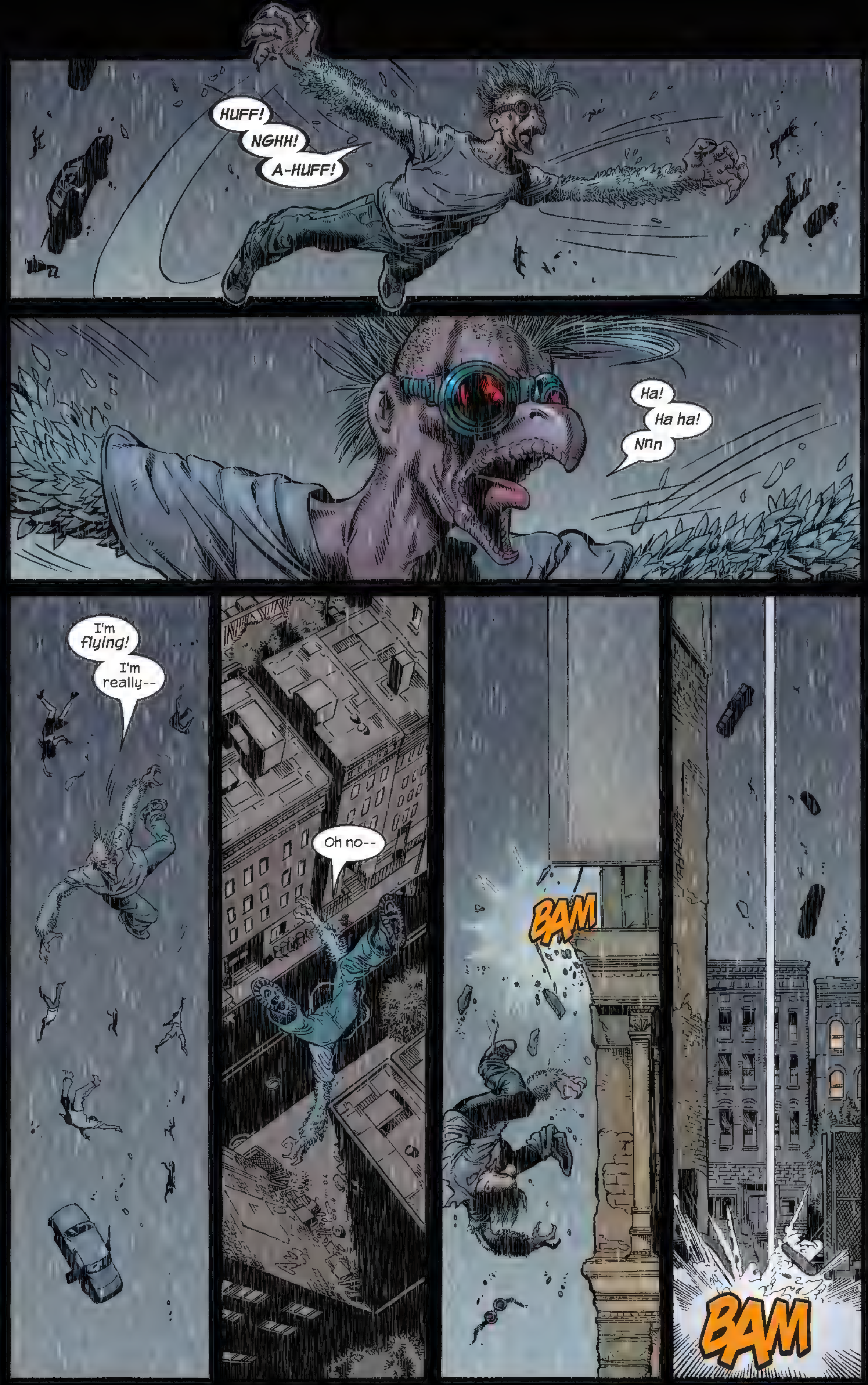

It's a scientific *fact*--humans are a lower form of life.
They practically *admitted* it themselves when they called us *Homo Superior.*
Magneto wrote a brilliant *article* about how they can't even feel *pain* like we do.
SLLTHH
You should have been there for the *experiments,* Beak...
Wwaaukk? Everyone can feel pain!
Even a dog or a carrot can feel pain!
What?
A *carrot* can feel pain?
Yeah! Why not...?
Okay, maybe a carrot's the wrong fruit to *pick,* but there's no way I--
Vegetable!
Carrots are not *fruit* and this is *not* Xavier's School!
This is Magneto's *empire.*
Leave him be!

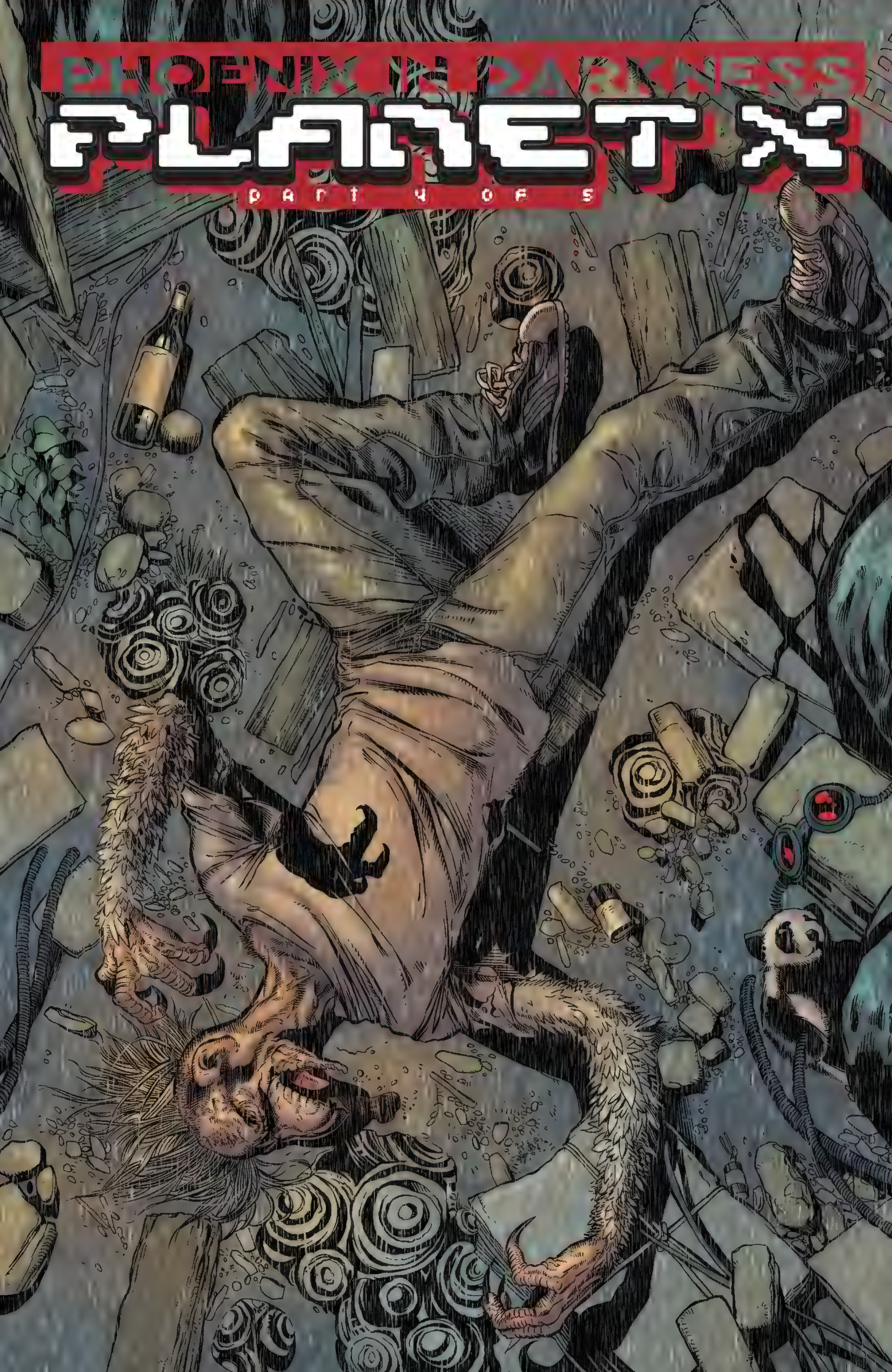

You leave him *alone!*
Mom!
Dad!
Look at you! You're *eight feet tall* and he's nothing but chicken bones and hair!
He's not a *killer!*
TT
Your children are *soldiers!* All of you are my *soldiers!*
And you will learn *discipline.* Put Beak with the humans.
With or *against* me--make your choice, children.
You! You're just like my *Daddy!*
I'll do what it takes to *save* mutantkind.
This guy's no *hero,* he's a *jerk!*
Magneto is nothing but a *jerk!*
Designed by Mother Nature to prey on the human organism.
Blame *her.*
hyuk
Somebody ruined it...
...who just *passed gas* at the most dramatic moment?

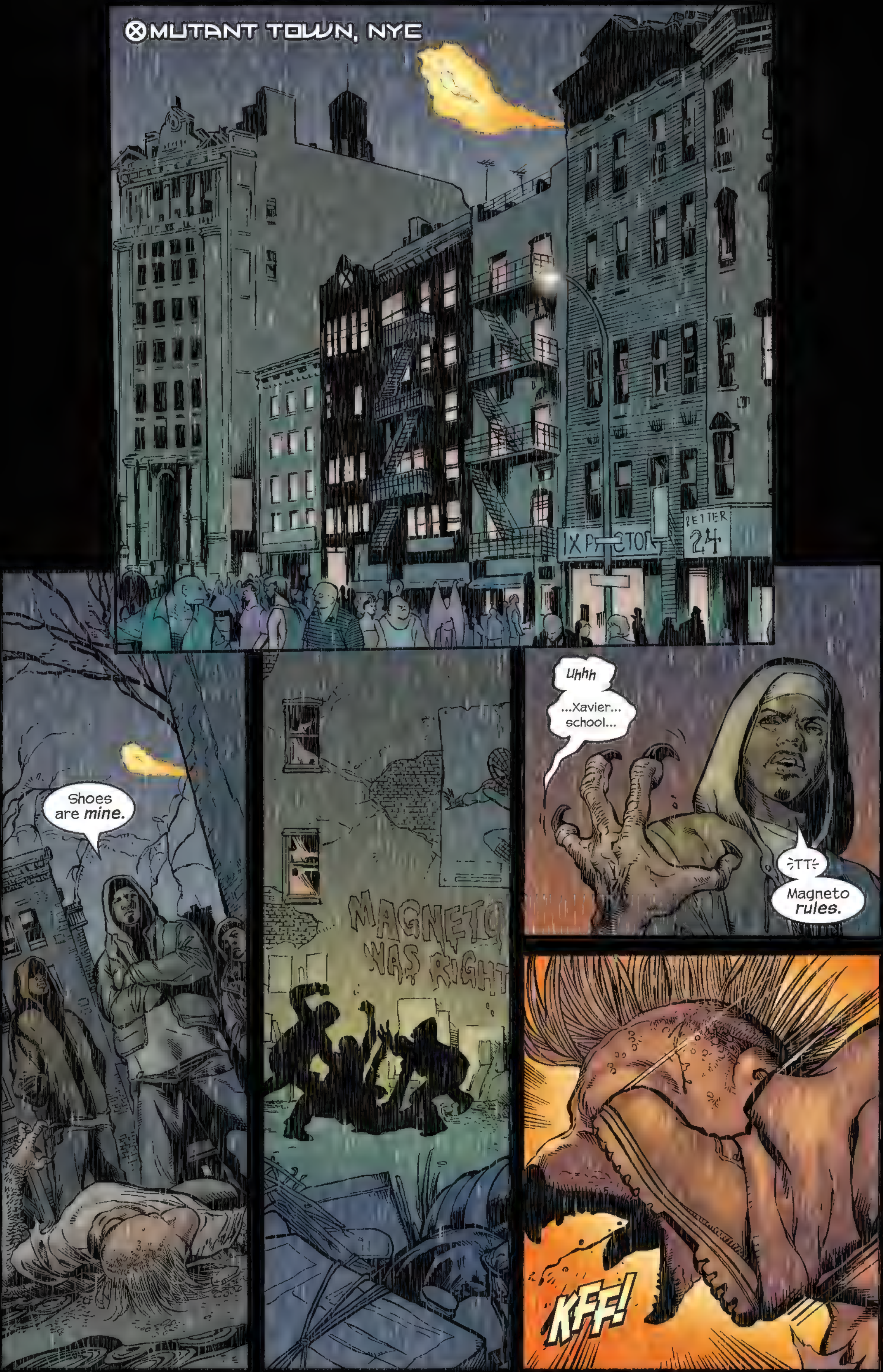

I Said *DISCIPLINE.*
E-rik!
I--I didn't mean to.
I...I... I only meant to teach Basilisk a *lesson...*
The Brotherhood will be recruiting a *new* inner circle, Toad.
-hyuk-
You heard him!
Find a pyrokinetic and dispose of that body or else we'll need a *truck* to get rid of him!

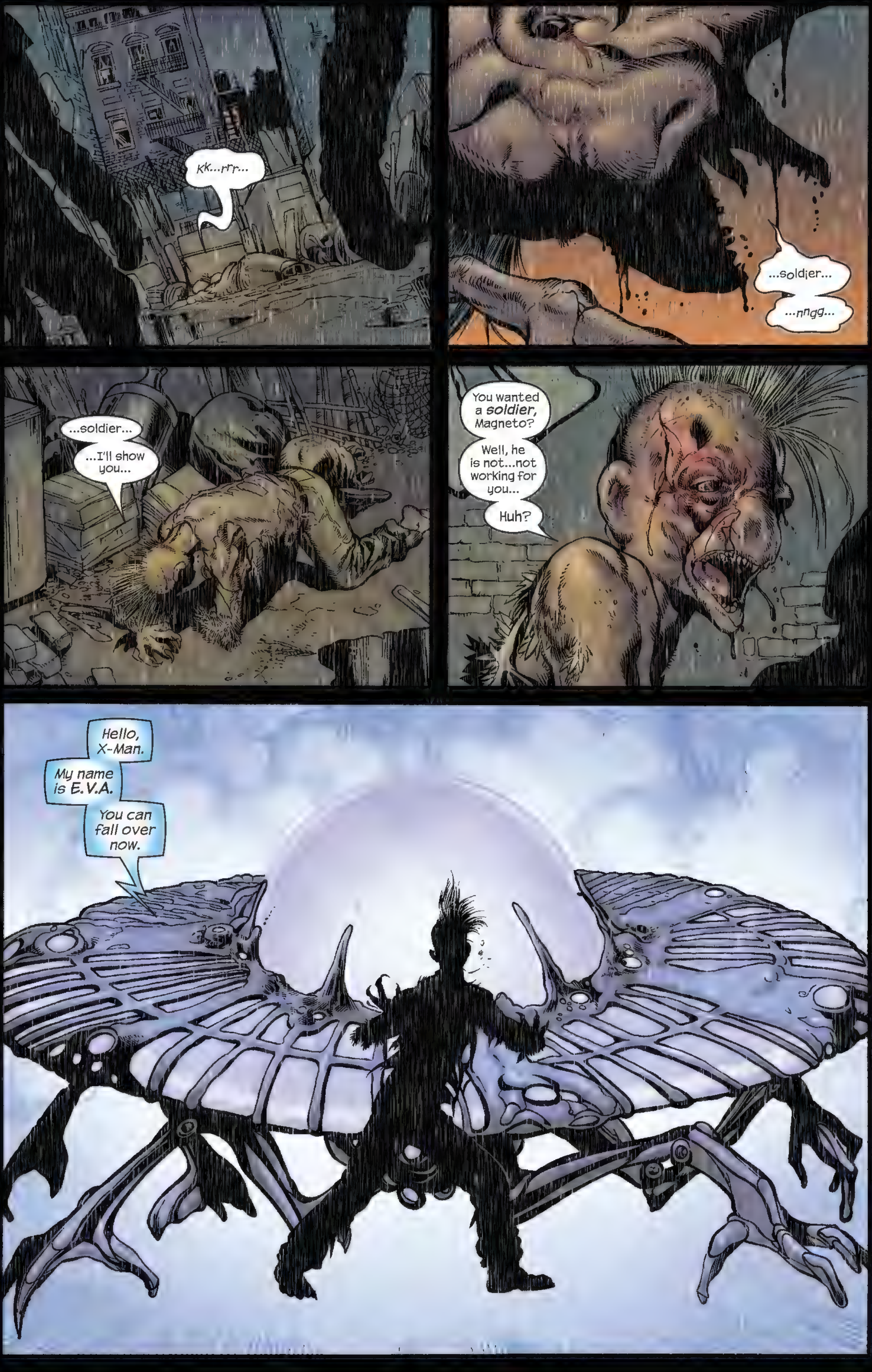

You're losing it big time!
The X-Men will beat you senseless, you crazy psycho killer!
I had such *hopes* for you, Beak.
I thought you could *transcend* your limitations.
Daaad
You will be a *soldier* or you will be *dead*.
Jerk!
UNNFF!
I'm a father...!
People like you shouldn't be *allowed* to breed!
Call this *natural selection.*
Mom!
This ain't right!
What are they *doing* to him?
Dad!
Hup!

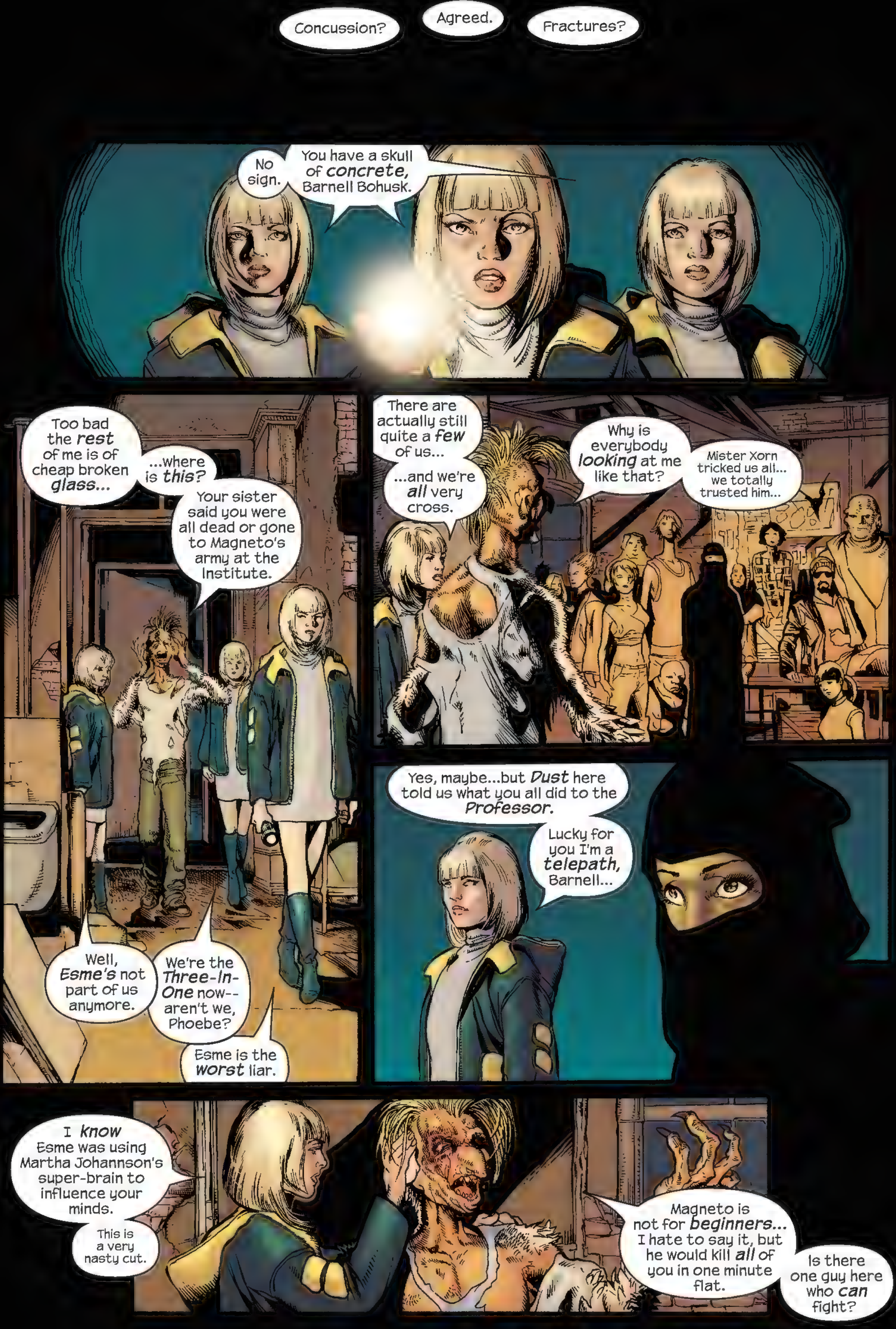

Spectacular!
Listen to them *screaming,* Erik!
Are you going to fling all the humans into *space?*
Shhh!
I'm trying to *concentrate,* Esme.
WAAAUKK!
I can fly
I can fly
I can--
WWAAAUUU

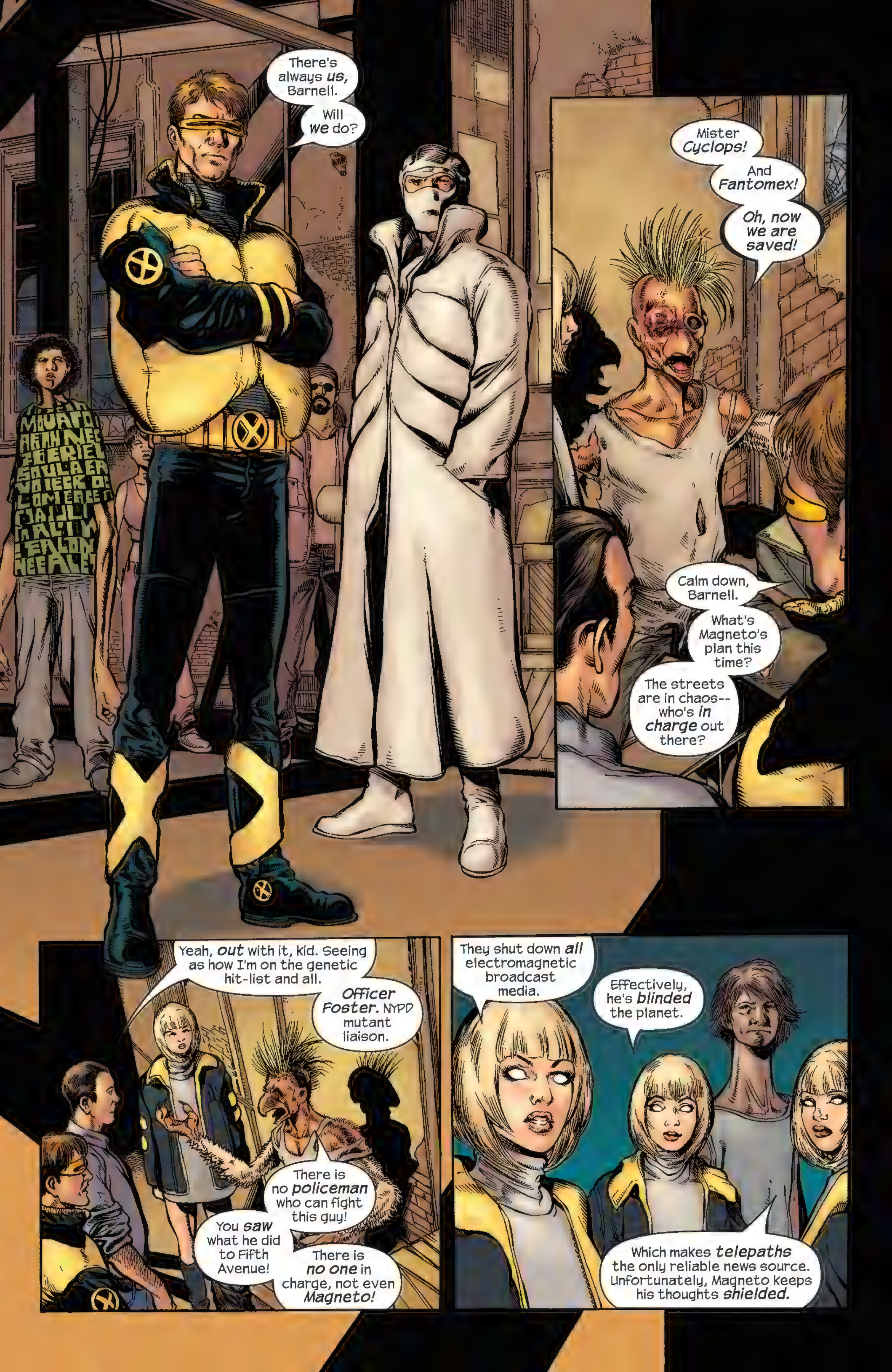

HUFF!
NGHH!
A-HUFF!
Ha!
Ha ha!
Nnn
I'm *flying!*
I'm really--
Oh no--
BAM
BAM

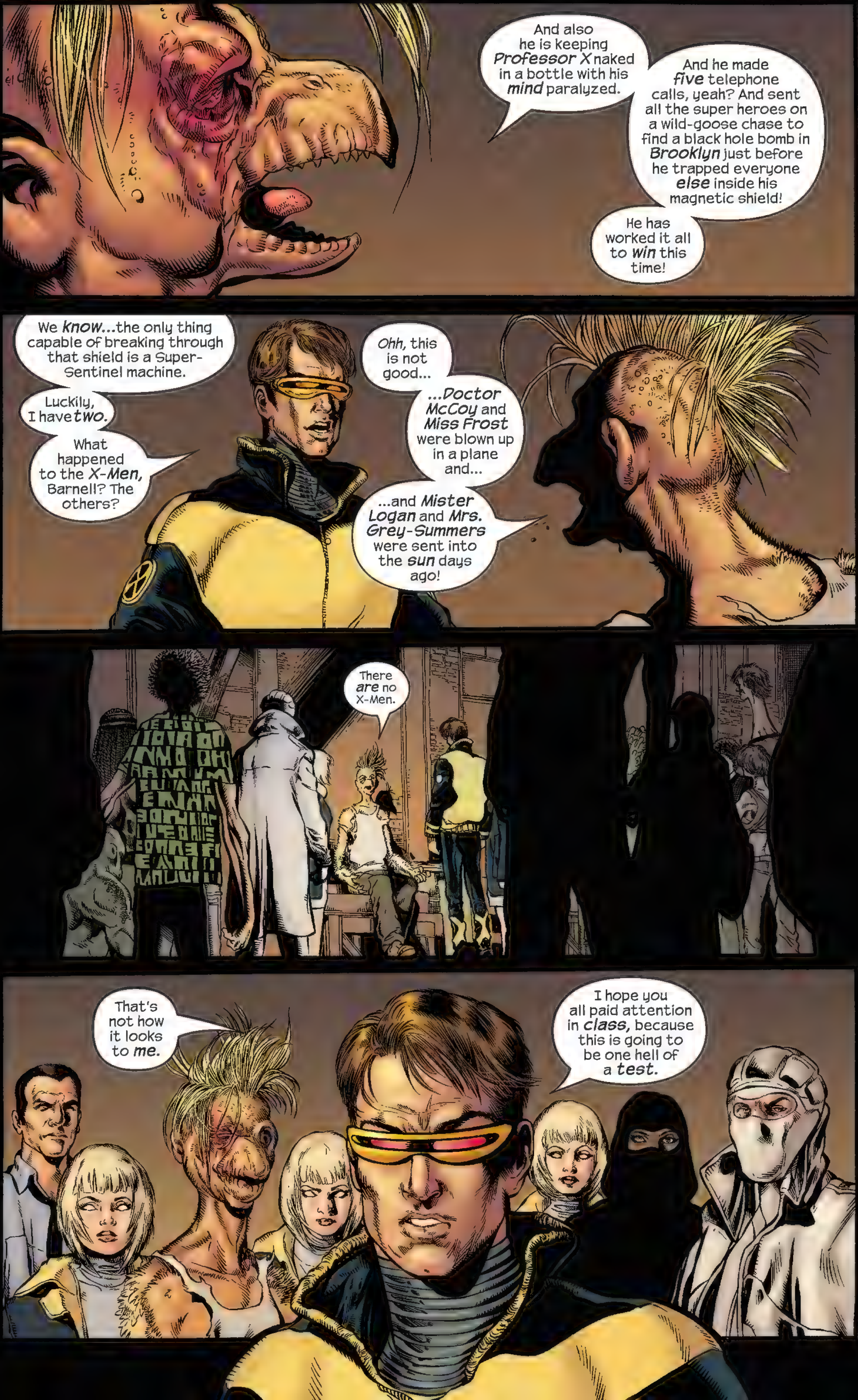

PHOENIX IN DARKNESS
PLANET X
part 4 of 5

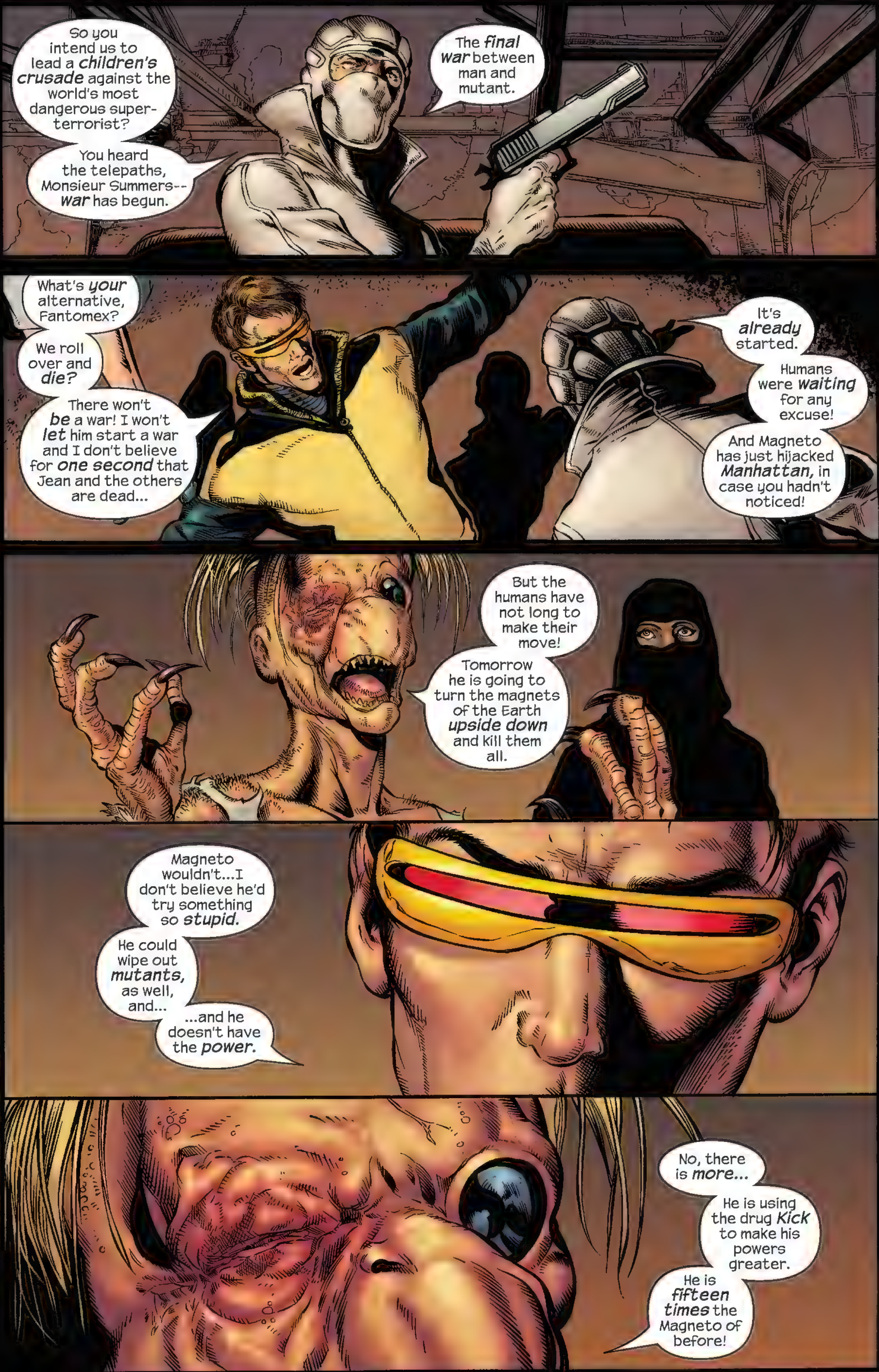

MUTANT TOWN, NYC
Shoes are *mine.*
MAGNETO WAS RIGHT
Uhhh
...Xavier... school...
TT
Magneto *rules.*
KFF!

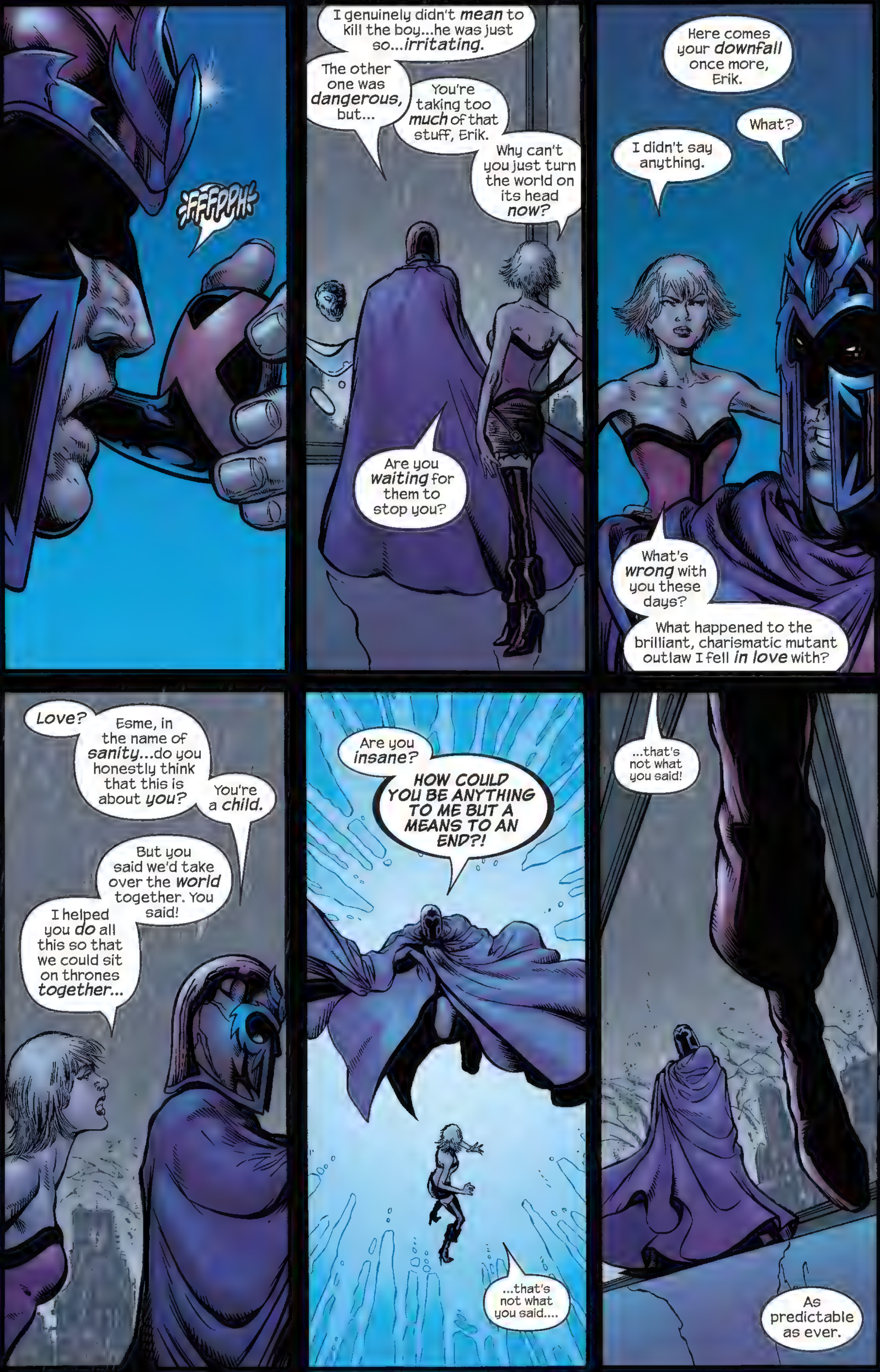

Kk...rrr...
...soldier...
...nngg...
...soldier...
...I'll show you...
You wanted a *soldier,* Magneto?
Well, he is not...not working for you...
Huh?
Hello, X-Man.
My name is E.V.A.
You can fall over now.

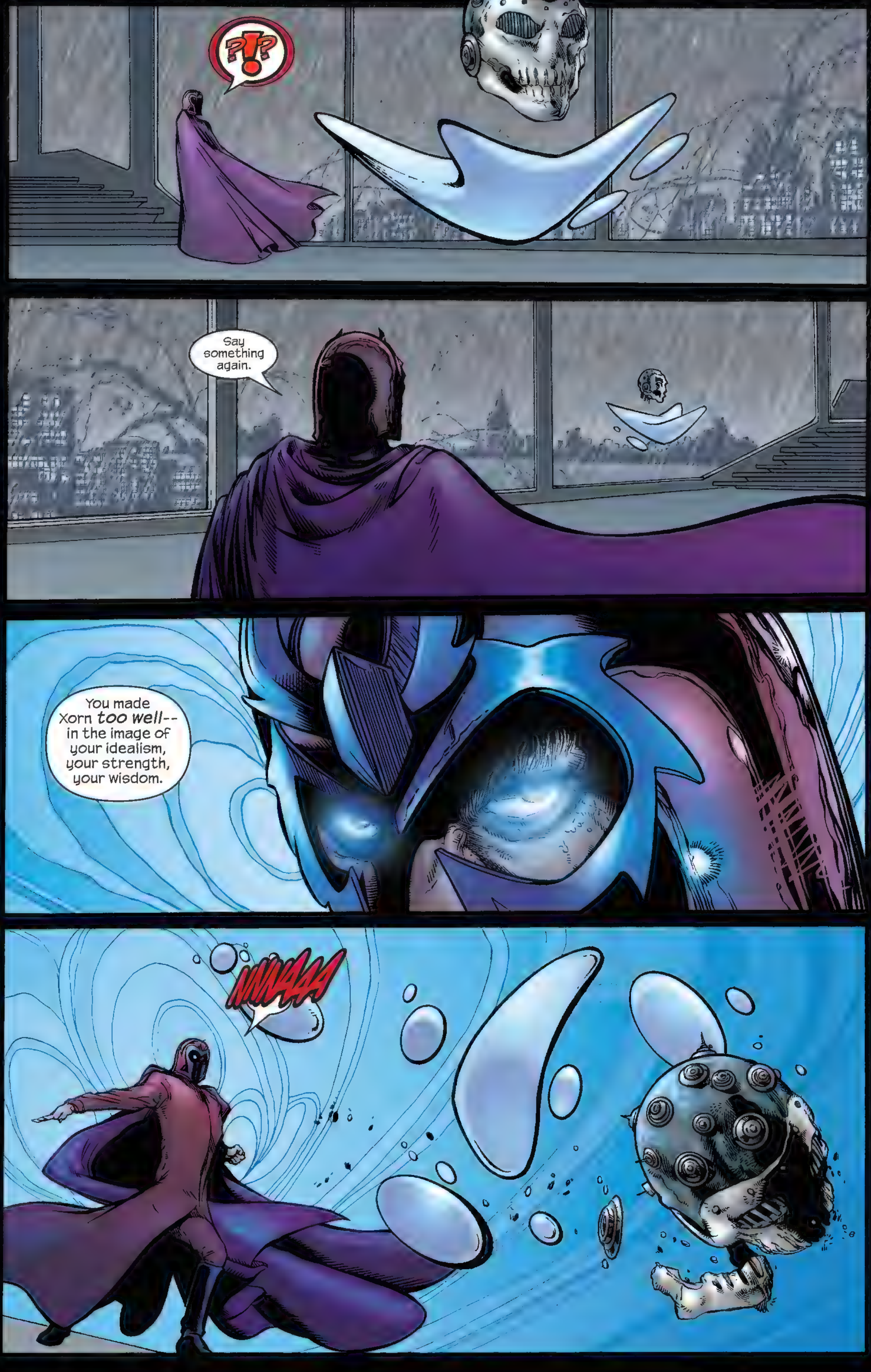

Concussion?
Agreed.
Fractures?
No sign.
You have a skull of *concrete,* Barnell Bohusk.
Too bad the *rest* of me is of cheap broken *glass...*
...where is *this?*
Your sister said you were all dead or gone to Magneto's army at the Institute.
Well, *Esme's* not part of us anymore.
We're the *Three-In-One* now--aren't we, Phoebe?
Esme is the *worst* liar.
There are actually still quite a *few* of us...
...and we're *all* very cross.
Why is everybody *looking* at me like that?
Mister Xorn tricked us all... we totally trusted him...
Yes, maybe...but *Dust* here told us what you all did to the *Professor.*
Lucky for you I'm a *telepath,* Barnell...
I *know* Esme was using Martha Johannson's super-brain to influence your minds.
This is a very nasty cut.
Magneto is not for *beginners...* I hate to say it, but he would kill *all* of you in one minute flat.
Is there one guy here who *can* fight?

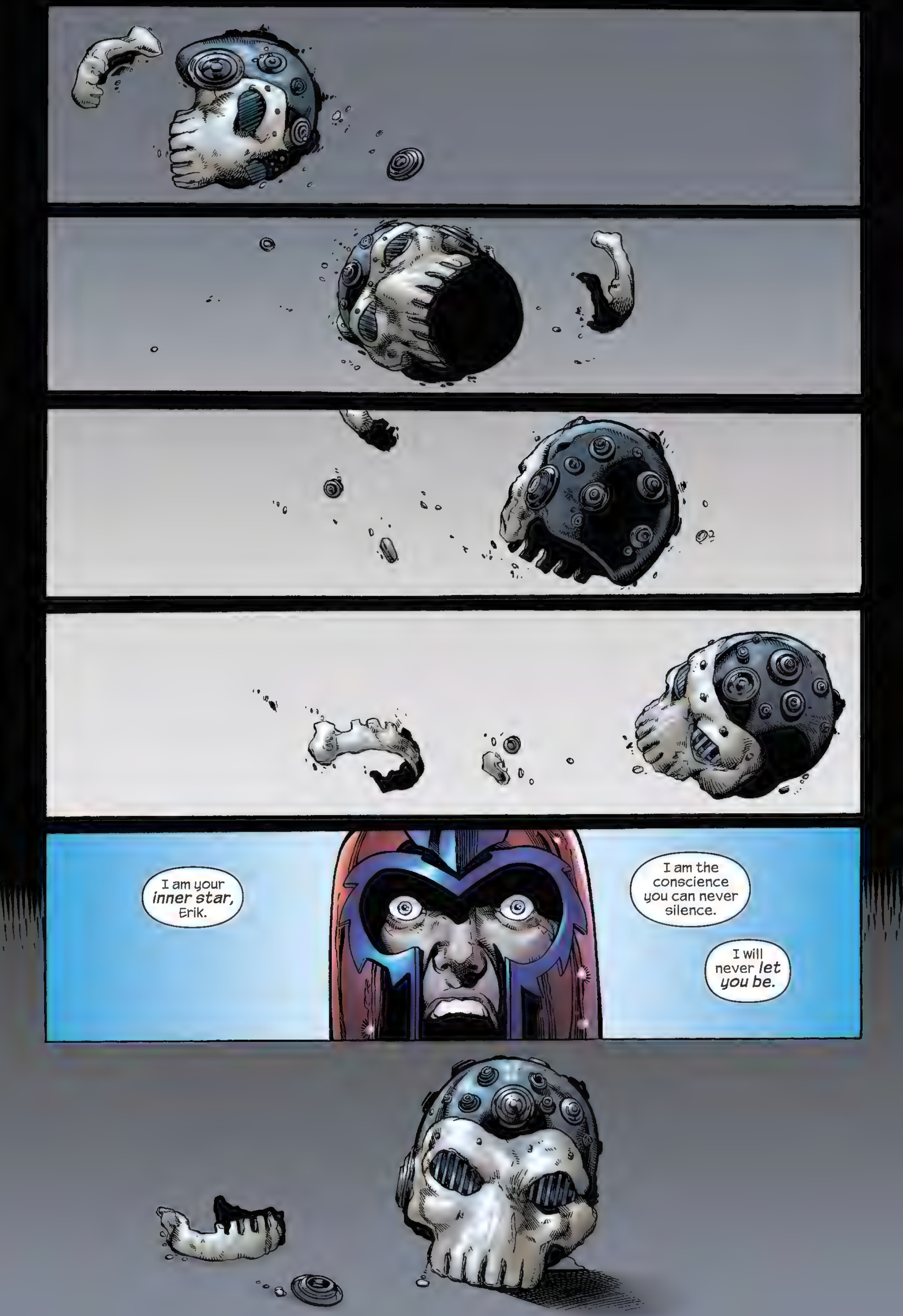

There's always *us*, Barnell.
Will *we* do?
Mister *Cyclops!*
And *Fantomex!*
Oh, now we are saved!
Calm down, Barnell.
What's Magneto's plan this time?
The streets are in chaos-- who's *in charge* out there?
Yeah, *out* with it, kid. Seeing as how I'm on the genetic hit-list and all.
Officer Foster. NYPD mutant liaison.
There is no *policeman* who can fight this guy!
You *saw* what he did to Fifth Avenue!
There is *no one* in charge, not even *Magneto!*
They shut down *all* electromagnetic broadcast media.
Effectively, he's *blinded* the planet.
Which makes *telepaths* the only reliable news source. Unfortunately, Magneto keeps his thoughts *shielded.*

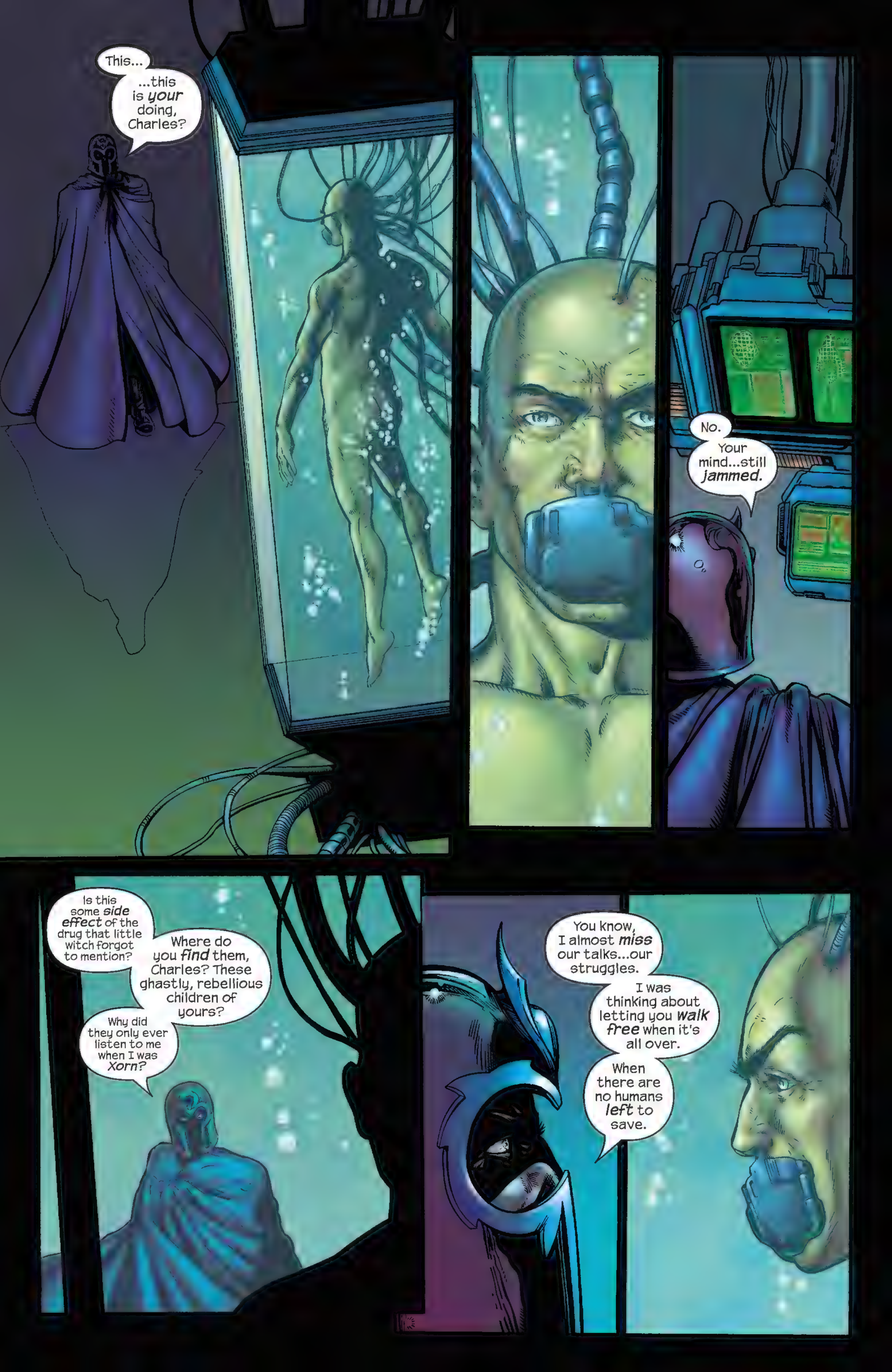

And also he is keeping *Professor X* naked in a bottle with his *mind* paralyzed.
And he made *five* telephone calls, yeah? And sent all the super heroes on a wild-goose chase to find a black hole bomb in *Brooklyn* just before he trapped everyone *else* inside his magnetic shield!
He has worked it all to *win* this time!
We *know*...the only thing capable of breaking through that shield is a Super-Sentinel machine.
Luckily, I have *two.*
What happened to the *X-Men,* Barnell? The others?
Ohh, this is not good...
...*Doctor McCoy* and *Miss Frost* were blown up in a plane and...
...and *Mister Logan* and *Mrs. Grey-Summers* were sent into the *sun* days ago!
There *are* no X-Men.
That's not how it looks to *me.*
I hope you all paid attention in *class,* because this is going to be one hell of a *test.*

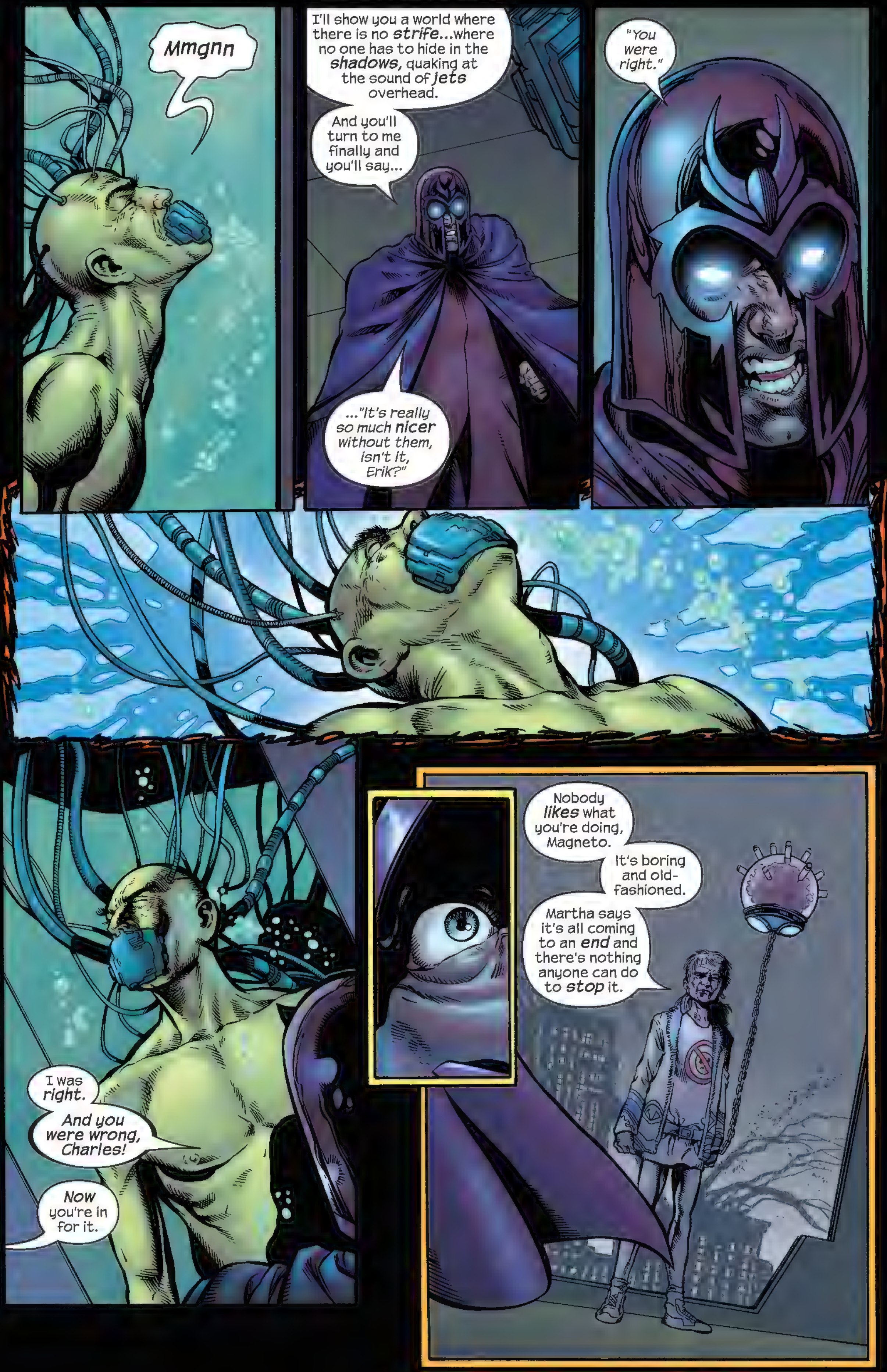

So you intend us to lead a *children's crusade* against the world's most dangerous super-terrorist?
You heard the telepaths, Monsieur Summers-- *war* has begun.
The *final war* between man and mutant.
What's *your* alternative, Fantomex?
We roll over and *die?*
There won't *be* a war! I won't *let* him start a war and I don't believe for *one second* that Jean and the others are dead...
It's *already* started.
Humans were *waiting* for any excuse!
And Magneto has just hijacked *Manhattan,* in case you hadn't noticed!
But the humans have not long to make their move!
Tomorrow he is going to turn the magnets of the Earth *upside down* and kill them all.
Magneto wouldn't...I don't believe he'd try something so *stupid.*
He could wipe out *mutants,* as well, and...
...and he doesn't have the *power.*
No, there is *more...*
He is using the drug *Kick* to make his powers greater.
He is *fifteen times* the Magneto of before!

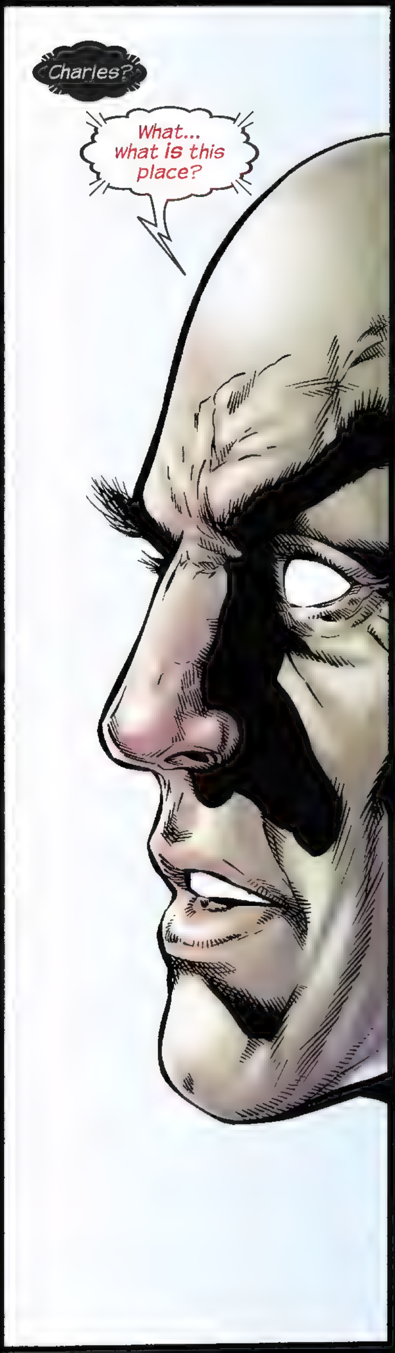

FFFPPH
I genuinely didn't *mean* to kill the boy...he was just so...*irritating.*
The other one was *dangerous,* but...
You're taking too *much* of that stuff, Erik.
Why can't you just turn the world on its head *now?*
Are you *waiting* for them to stop you?
Here comes your *downfall* once more, Erik.
What?
I didn't say anything.
What's *wrong* with you these days?
What happened to the brilliant, charismatic mutant outlaw I fell *in love* with?
Love?
Esme, in the name of *sanity*...do you honestly think that this is about *you?*
You're a *child.*
But you said we'd take over the *world* together. You said!
I helped you *do* all this so that we could sit on thrones *together*...
Are you *insane?*
HOW COULD YOU BE ANYTHING TO ME BUT A MEANS TO AN END?!
...that's not what you said....
...that's not what you said!
As predictable as ever.

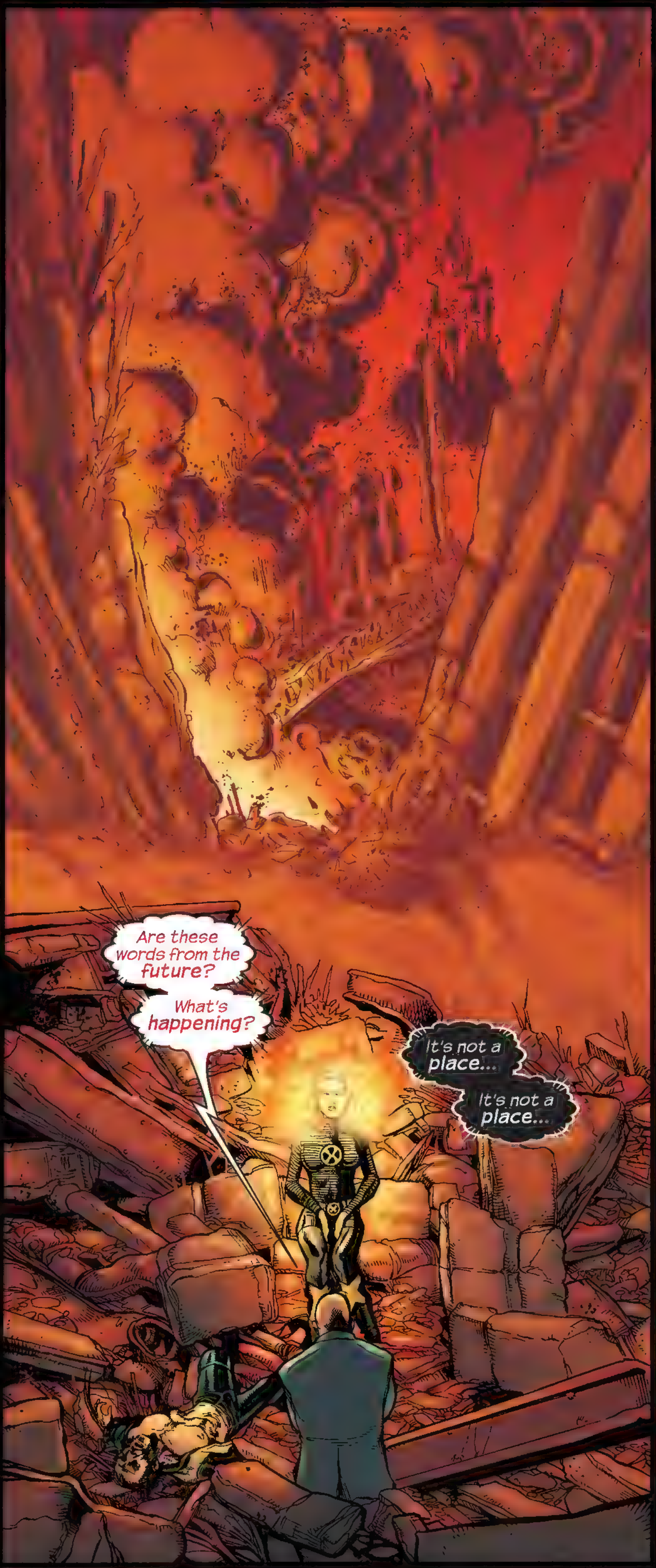

?!?
Say something again.
You made Xorn *too well*-- in the image of your idealism, your strength, your wisdom.
NNNAAA

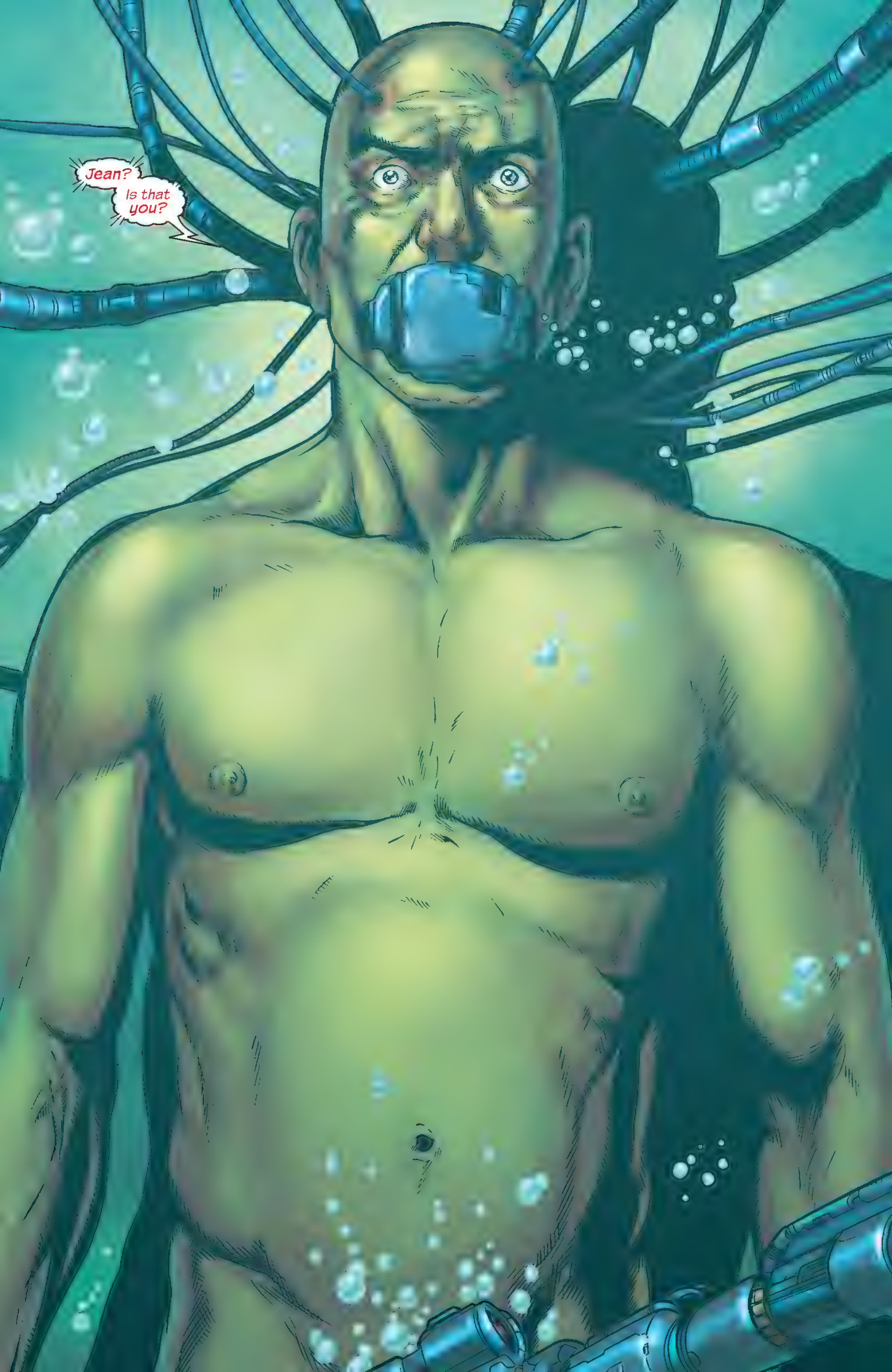

I am your *inner star,* Erik.
I am the conscience you can never silence.
I will never *let you be.*

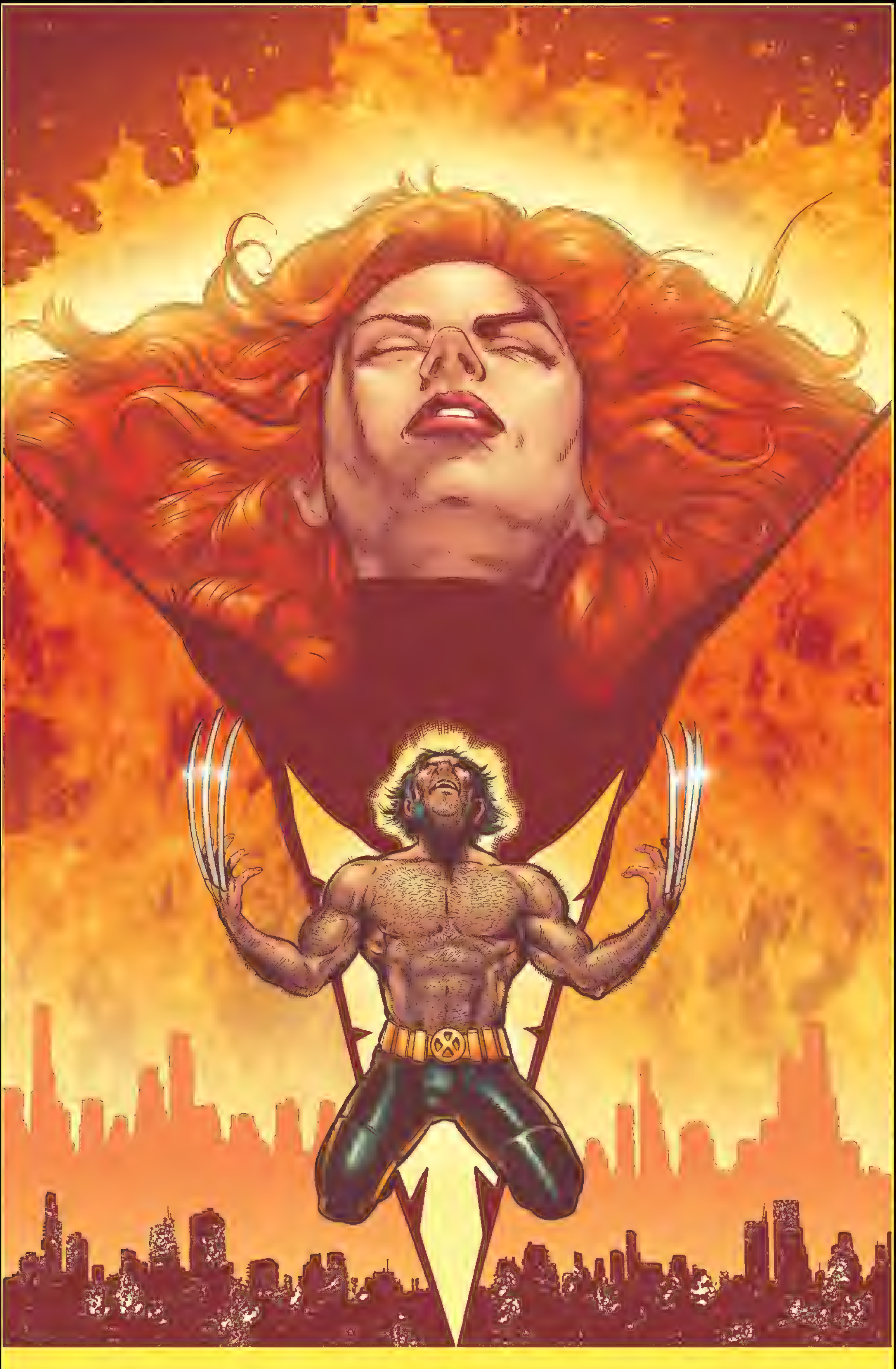

This...
...this is *your* doing, Charles?
No.
Your mind...still *jammed.*
Is this some *side effect* of the drug that little witch forgot to mention?
Where do you *find* them, Charles? These ghastly, rebellious children of yours?
Why did they only ever listen to me when I was *Xorn?*
You know, I almost *miss* our talks...our struggles.
I was thinking about letting you *walk free* when it's all over.
When there are no humans *left* to save.


Mmgnn
I'll show you a world where there is no *strife*...where no one has to hide in the *shadows*, quaking at the sound of *jets* overhead.
And you'll turn to me finally and you'll say...
..."It's really so much **nicer** without them, isn't it, Erik?"
"You were right."
I was *right.*
And you were wrong, Charles!
Now you're in for it.
Nobody *likes* what you're doing, Magneto.
It's boring and old-fashioned.
Martha says it's all coming to an *end* and there's nothing anyone can do to *stop* it.

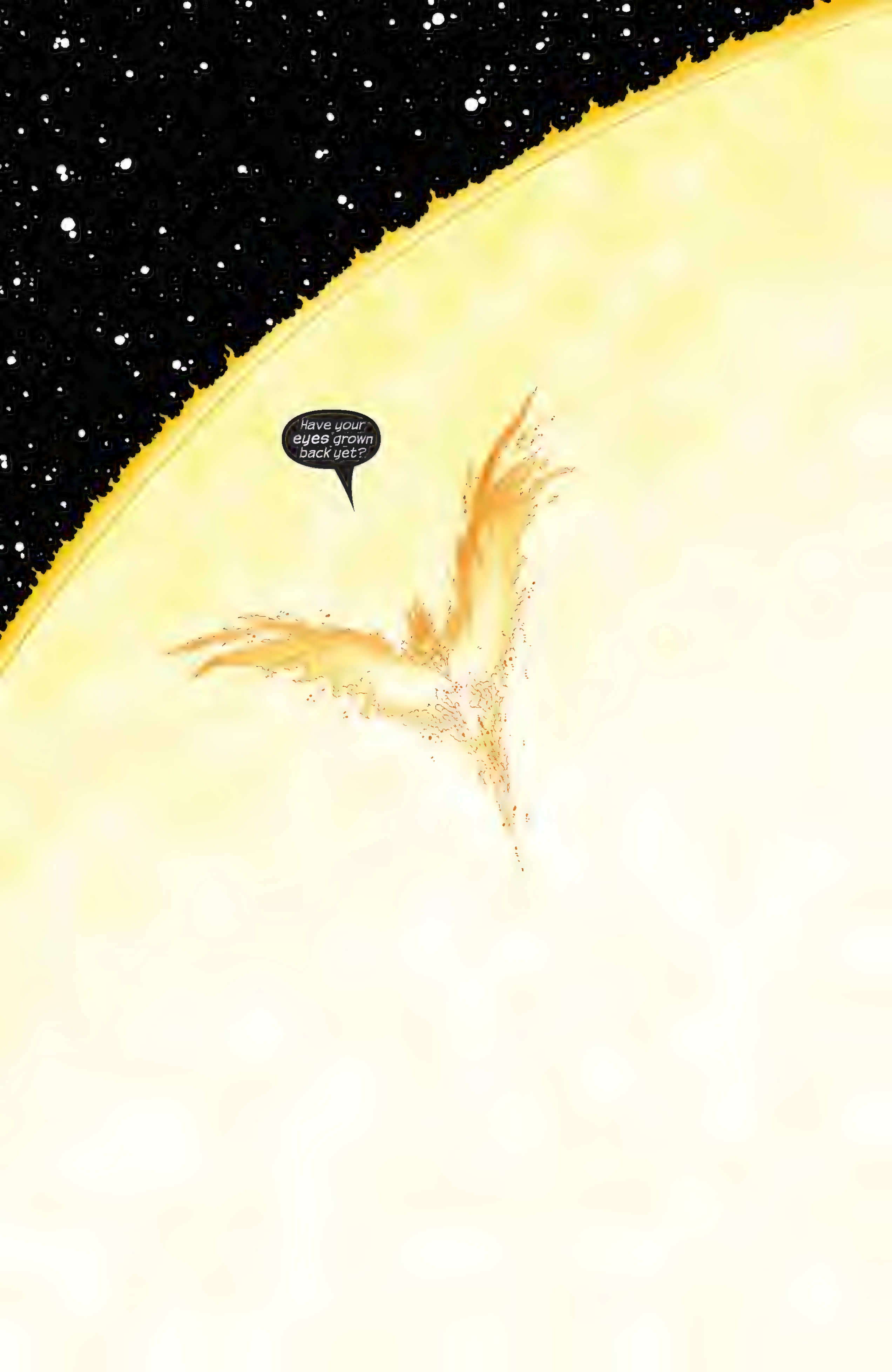

Charles?
What... what is this place?


Are these words from the future?
What's happening?
It's not a place...
It's not a place...

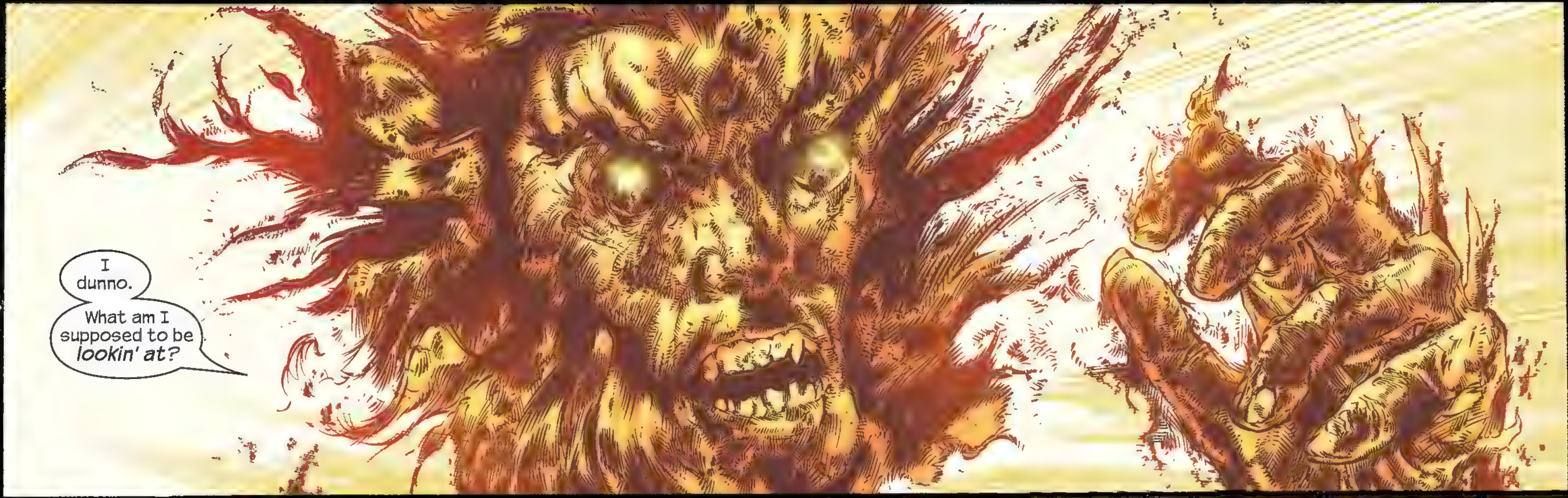

Jean? Is that you?

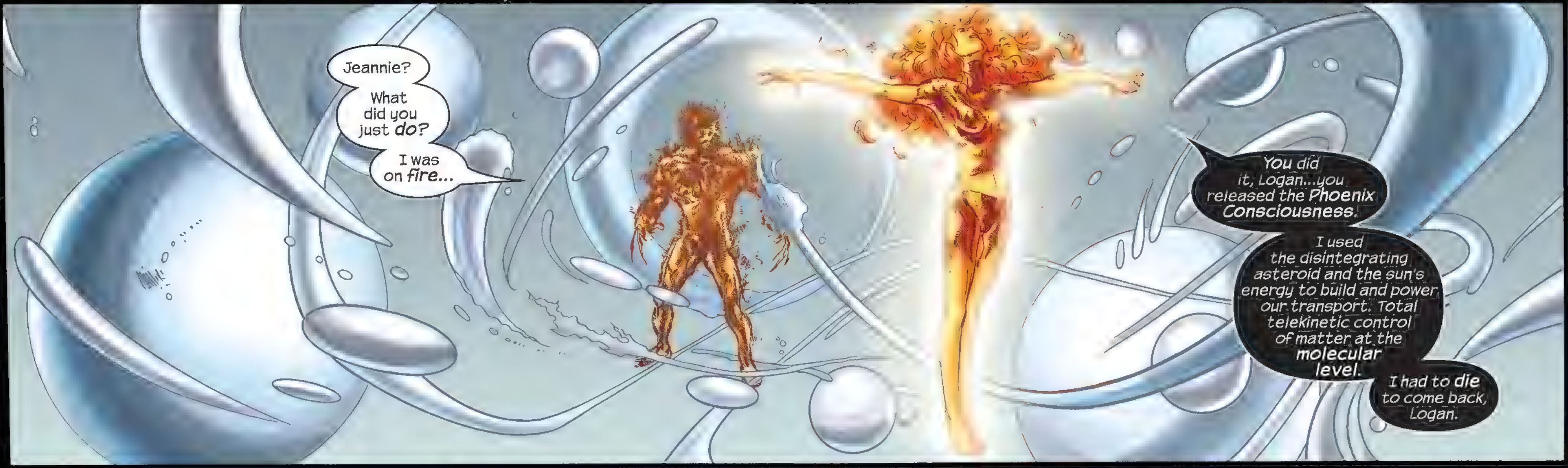


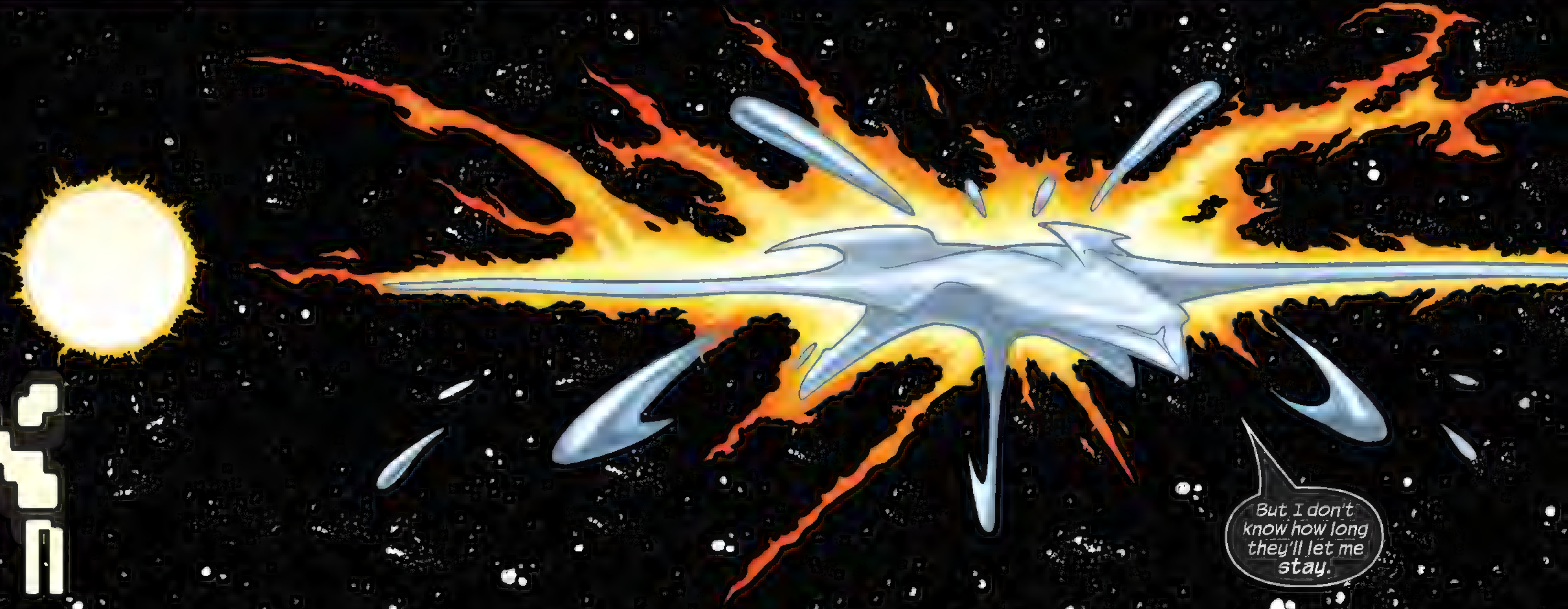
NEW X-MEN #150
"PLANET X PART FIVE: PHOENIX INVICTUS"


Have your eyes grown back yet?

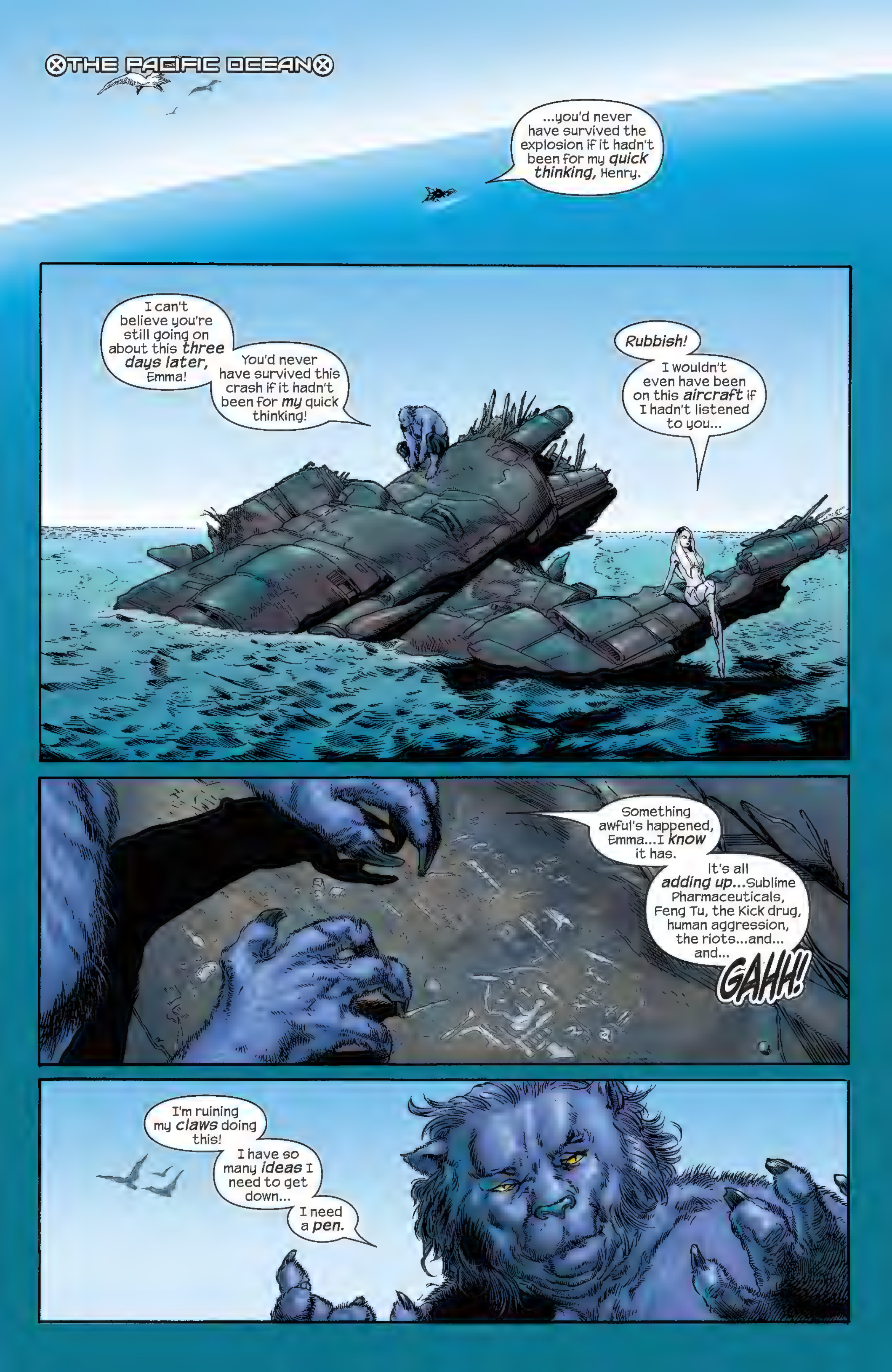
PHOENIX INVICTUS

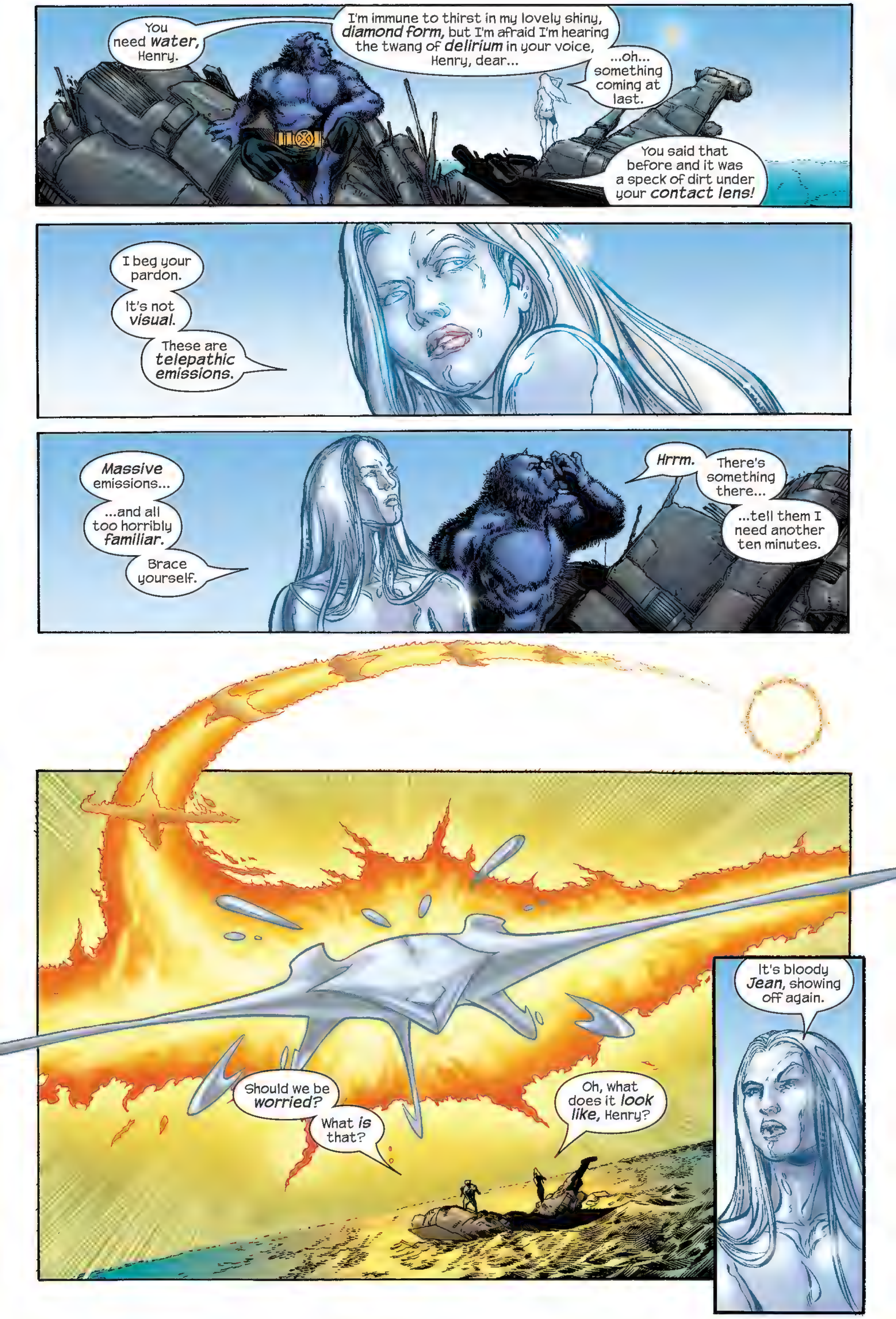

I dunno.
What am I supposed to be *lookin' at?*

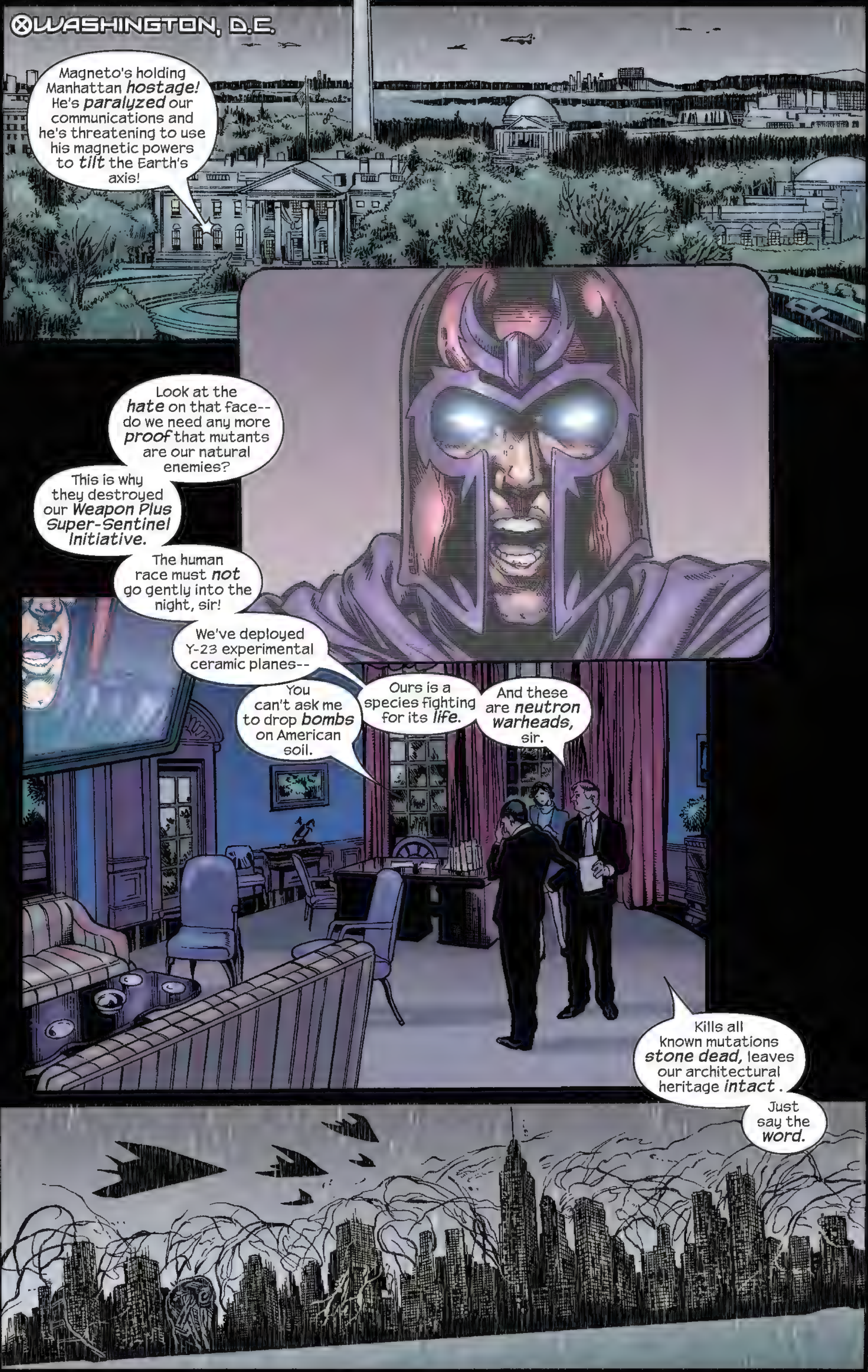

Jeannie?
What did you just *do?*
I was on *fire...*
You did it, Logan...you released the **Phoenix Consciousness.**
I used the disintegrating asteroid and the sun's energy to build and power our transport. Total telekinetic control of matter at the **molecular level.**
I had to **die** to come back, Logan.

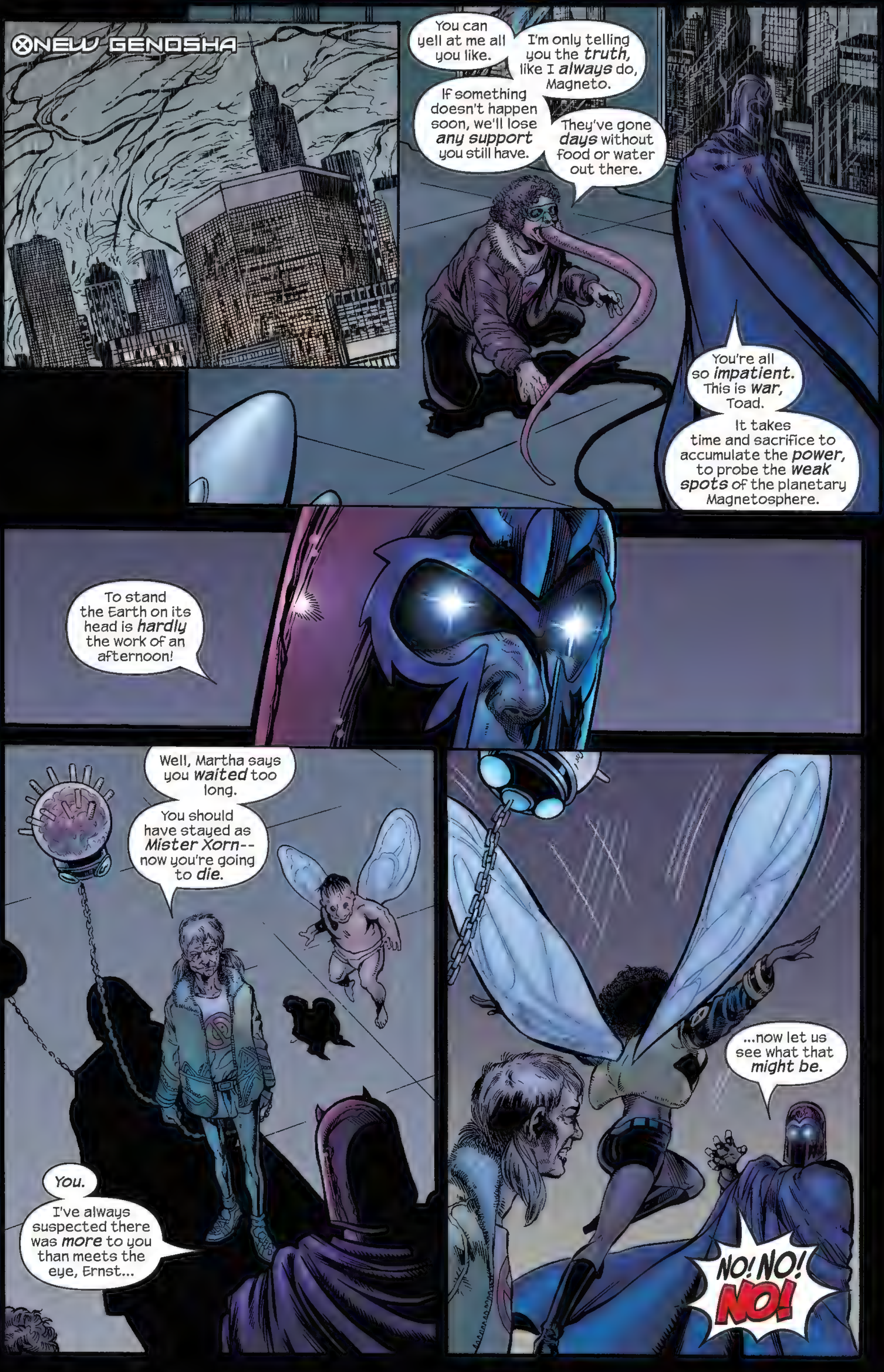

But I don't know how long they'll let me **stay.**

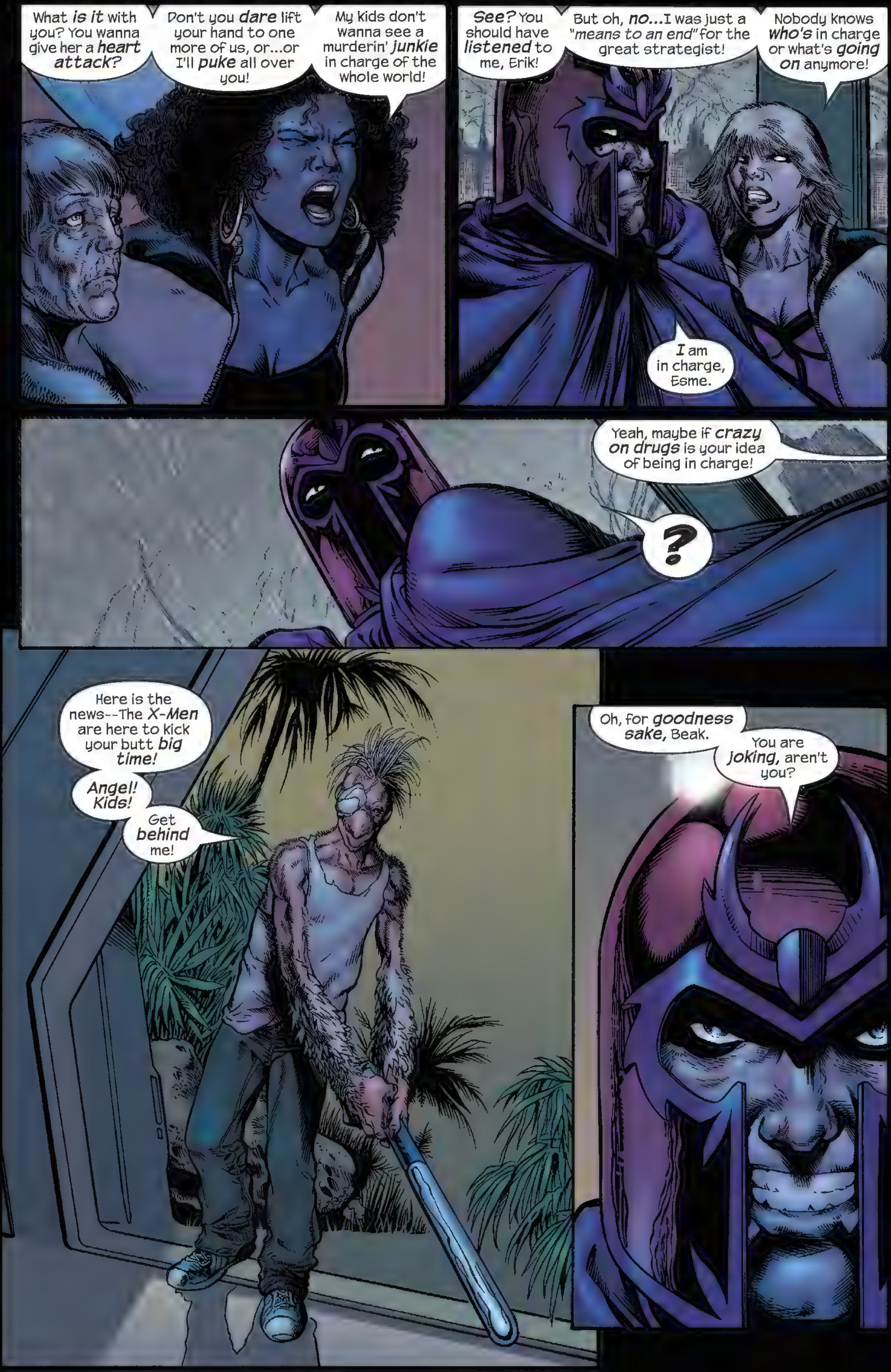
PLANET X
CONCLUSION

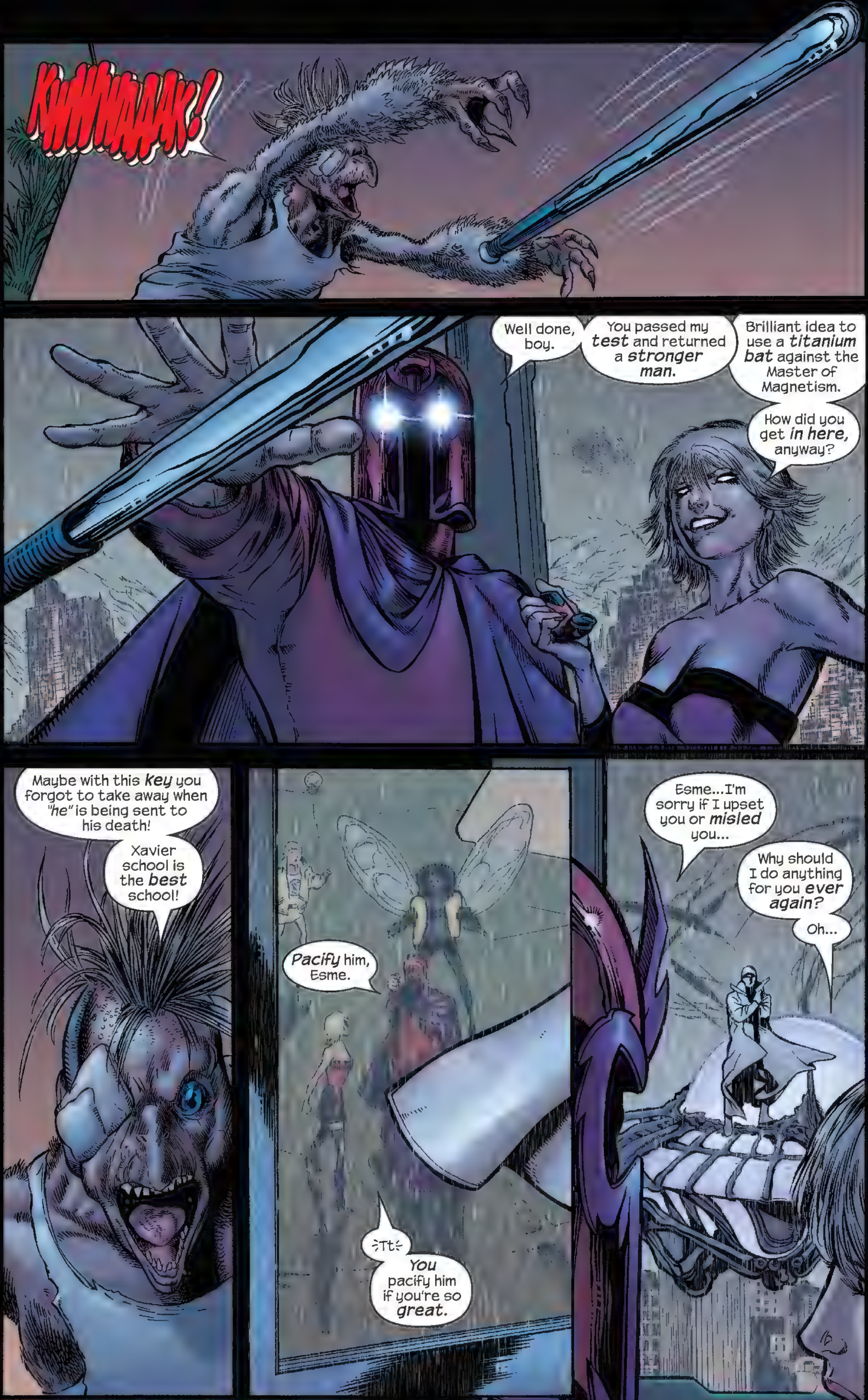

THE PACIFIC OCEAN
...you'd never have survived the explosion if it hadn't been for my *quick thinking,* Henry.
I can't believe you're still going on about this *three days later,* Emma!
You'd never have survived this crash if it hadn't been for *my* quick thinking!
Rubbish!
I wouldn't even have been on this *aircraft* if I hadn't listened to you...
Something awful's happened, Emma...I *know* it has.
It's all *adding up...*Sublime Pharmaceuticals, Feng Tu, the Kick drug, human aggression, the riots...and... and...
GAHH!
I'm ruining my *claws* doing this!
I have so many *ideas* I need to get down...
I need a *pen.*

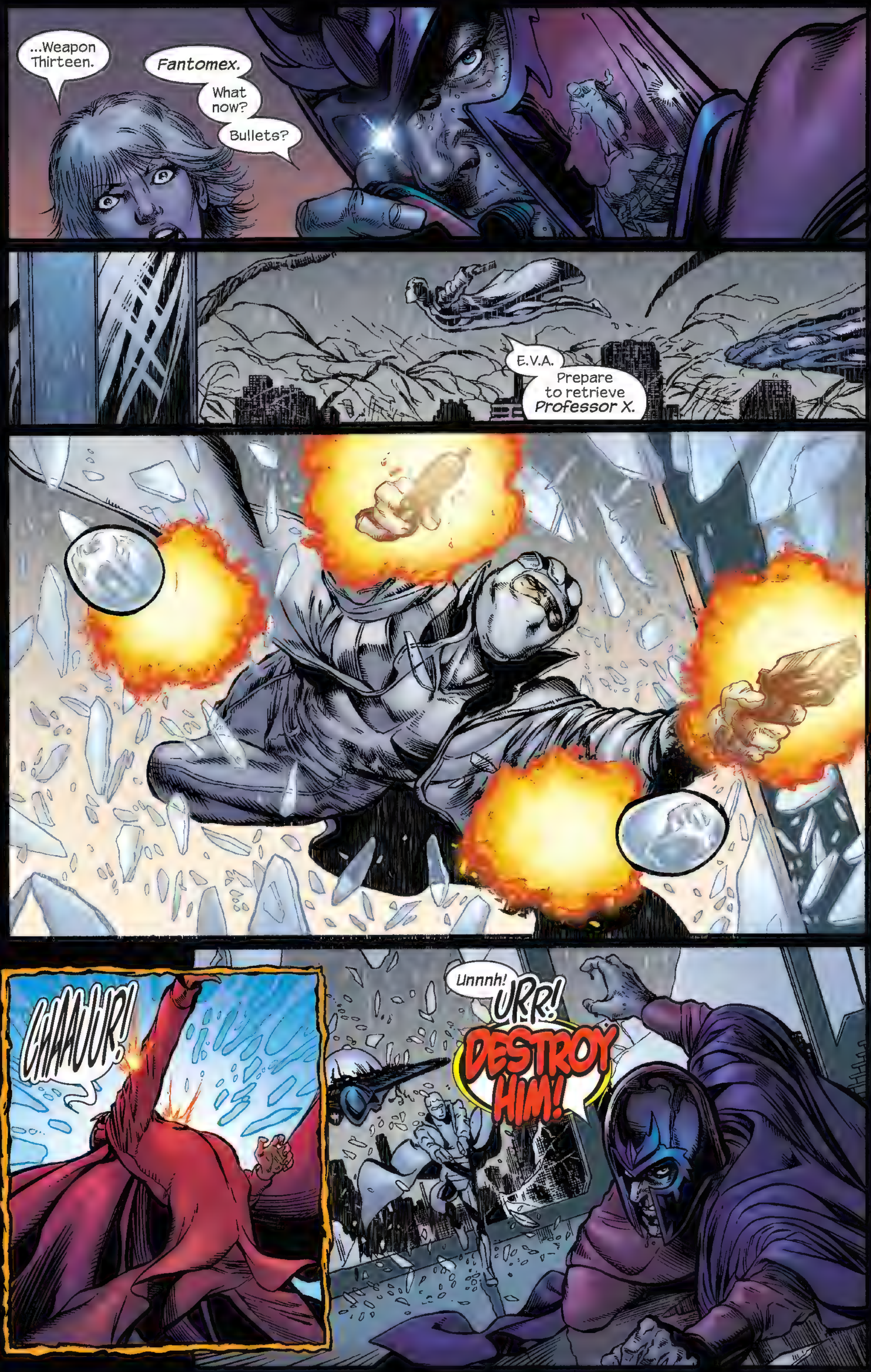

You need *water,* Henry.
I'm immune to thirst in my lovely shiny, *diamond form,* but I'm afraid I'm hearing the twang of *delirium* in your voice, Henry, dear...
...oh... something coming at last.
You said that before and it was a speck of dirt under your *contact lens!*
I beg your pardon.
It's not *visual.*
These are *telepathic emissions.*
Massive emissions...
...and all too horribly *familiar.*
Brace yourself.
Hrrm.
There's something there...
...tell them I need another ten minutes.
Should we be *worried?*
What *is* that?
Oh, what does it *look like,* Henry?
It's bloody *Jean,* showing off again.

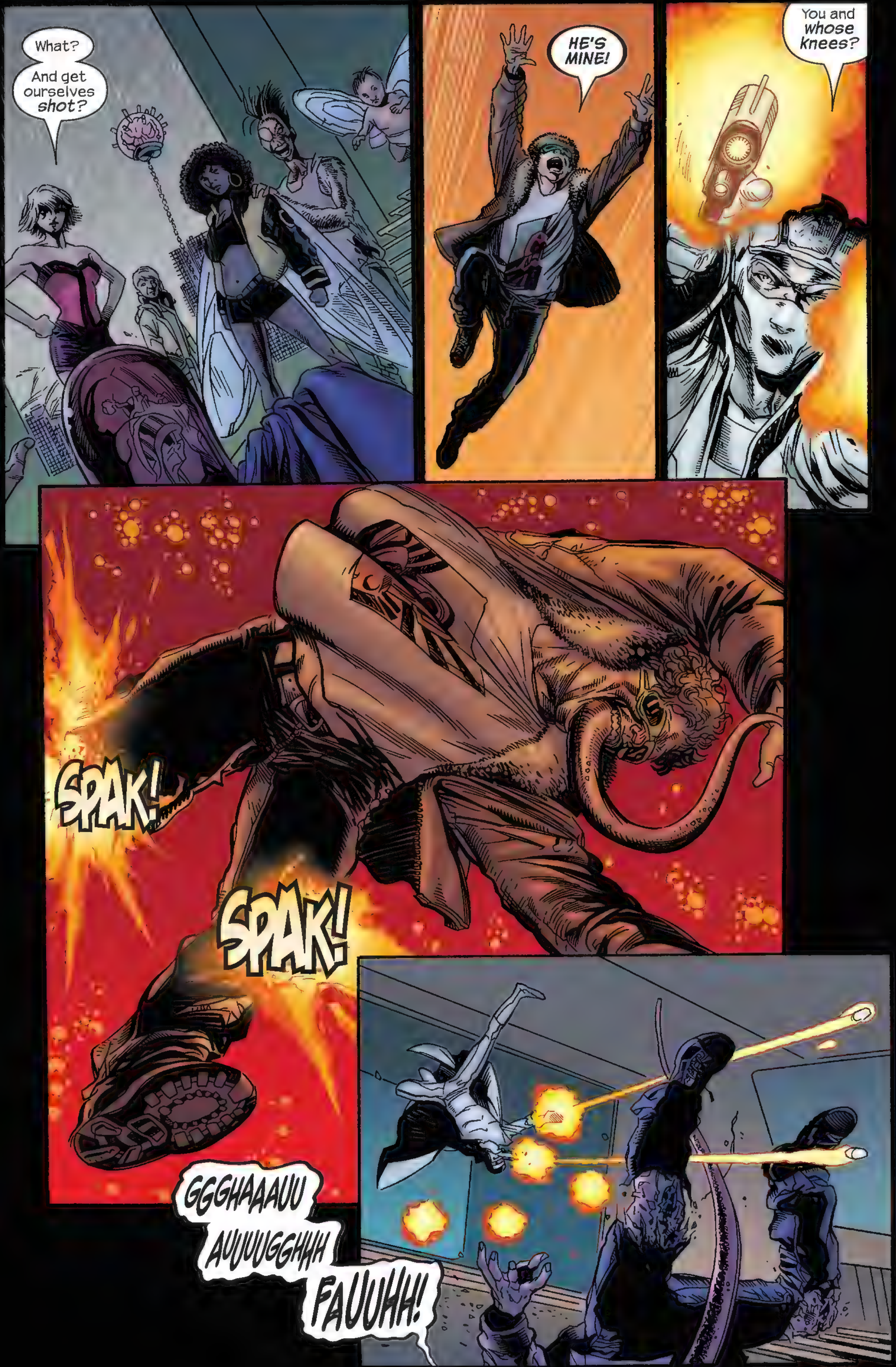

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Magneto's holding Manhattan hostage! He's paralyzed our communications and he's threatening to use his magnetic powers to tilt the Earth's axis!
Look at the hate on that face-- do we need any more proof that mutants are our natural enemies?
This is why they destroyed our Weapon Plus Super-Sentinel Initiative.
The human race must not go gently into the night, sir!
We've deployed Y-23 experimental ceramic planes--
You can't ask me to drop bombs on American soil.
Ours is a species fighting for its life.
And these are neutron warheads, sir.
Kills all known mutations stone dead, leaves our architectural heritage intact.
Just say the word.

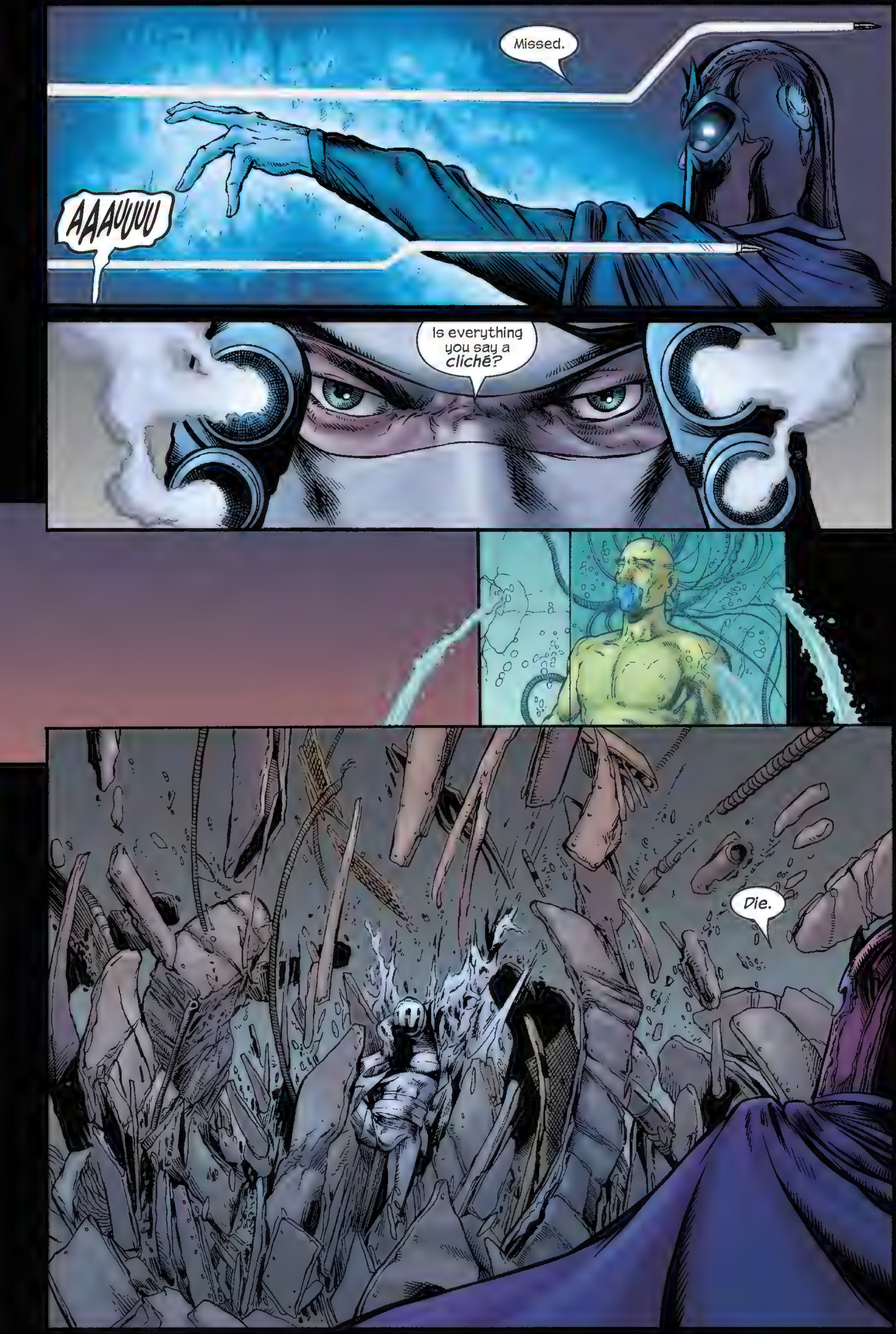

NEW GENOSHA
You can yell at me all you like.
I'm only telling you the *truth*, like I *always* do, Magneto.
If something doesn't happen soon, we'll lose *any support* you still have.
They've gone *days* without food or water out there.
You're all so *impatient*. This is *war*, Toad.
It takes time and sacrifice to accumulate the *power*, to probe the *weak spots* of the planetary Magnetosphere.
To stand the Earth on its head is *hardly* the work of an afternoon!
Well, Martha says you *waited* too long.
You should have stayed as *Mister Xorn*-- now you're going to *die*.
You.
I've always suspected there was *more* to you than meets the eye, Ernst...
...now let us see what that *might be*.
NO! NO! NO!

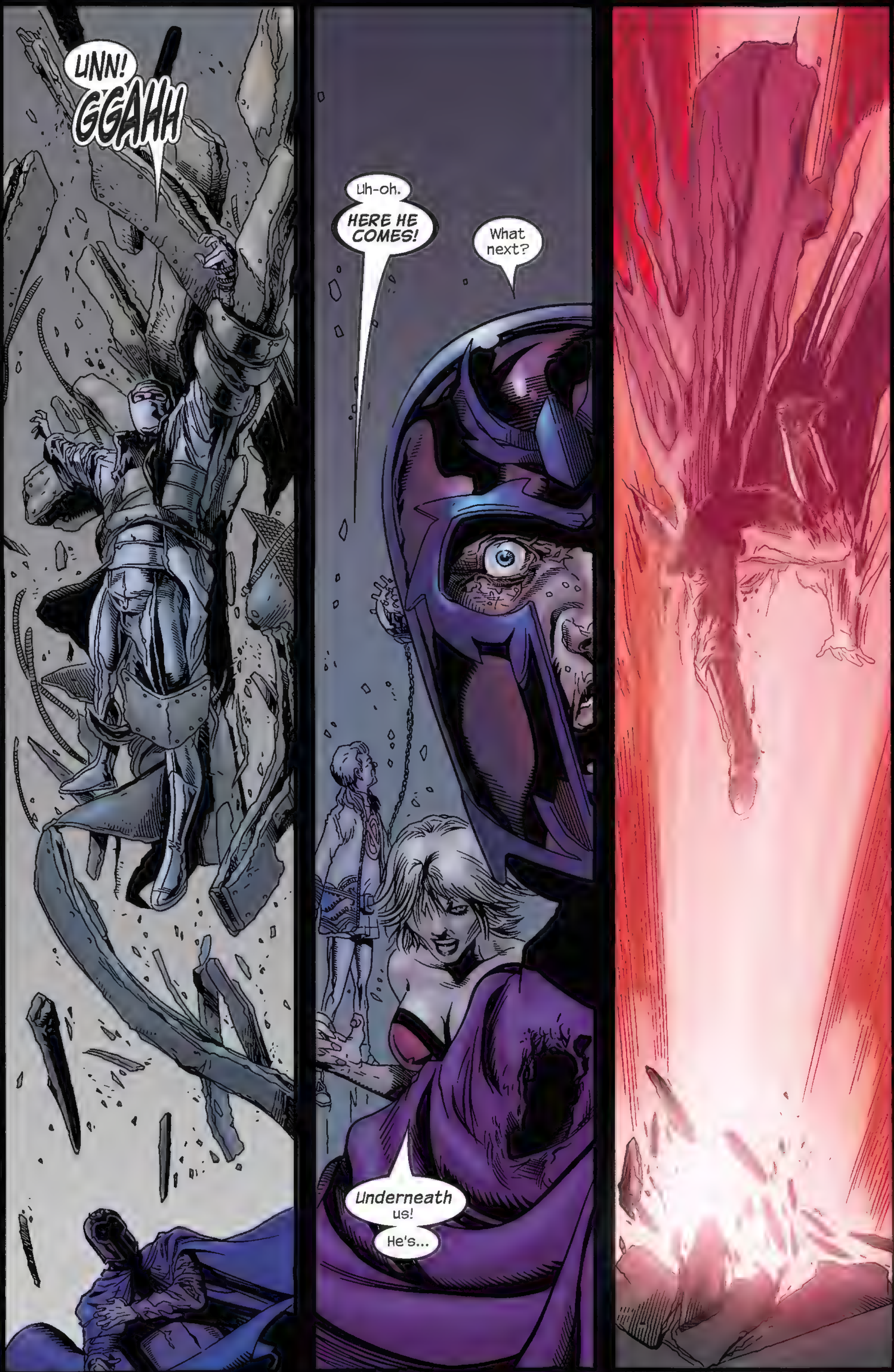

What *is it* with you? You wanna give her a *heart attack?*
Don't you *dare* lift your hand to one more of us, or...or I'll *puke* all over you!
My kids don't wanna see a murderin' *junkie* in charge of the whole world!
See? You should have *listened* to me, Erik!
But oh, *no...*I was just a *"means to an end"* for the great strategist!
Nobody knows *who's* in charge or what's *going on* anymore!
I am in charge, Esme.
Yeah, maybe if *crazy on drugs* is your idea of being in charge!
?
Here is the news--The *X-Men* are here to kick your butt *big time!*
Angel! Kids!
Get *behind* me!
Oh, for *goodness sake,* Beak.
You are *joking,* aren't you?

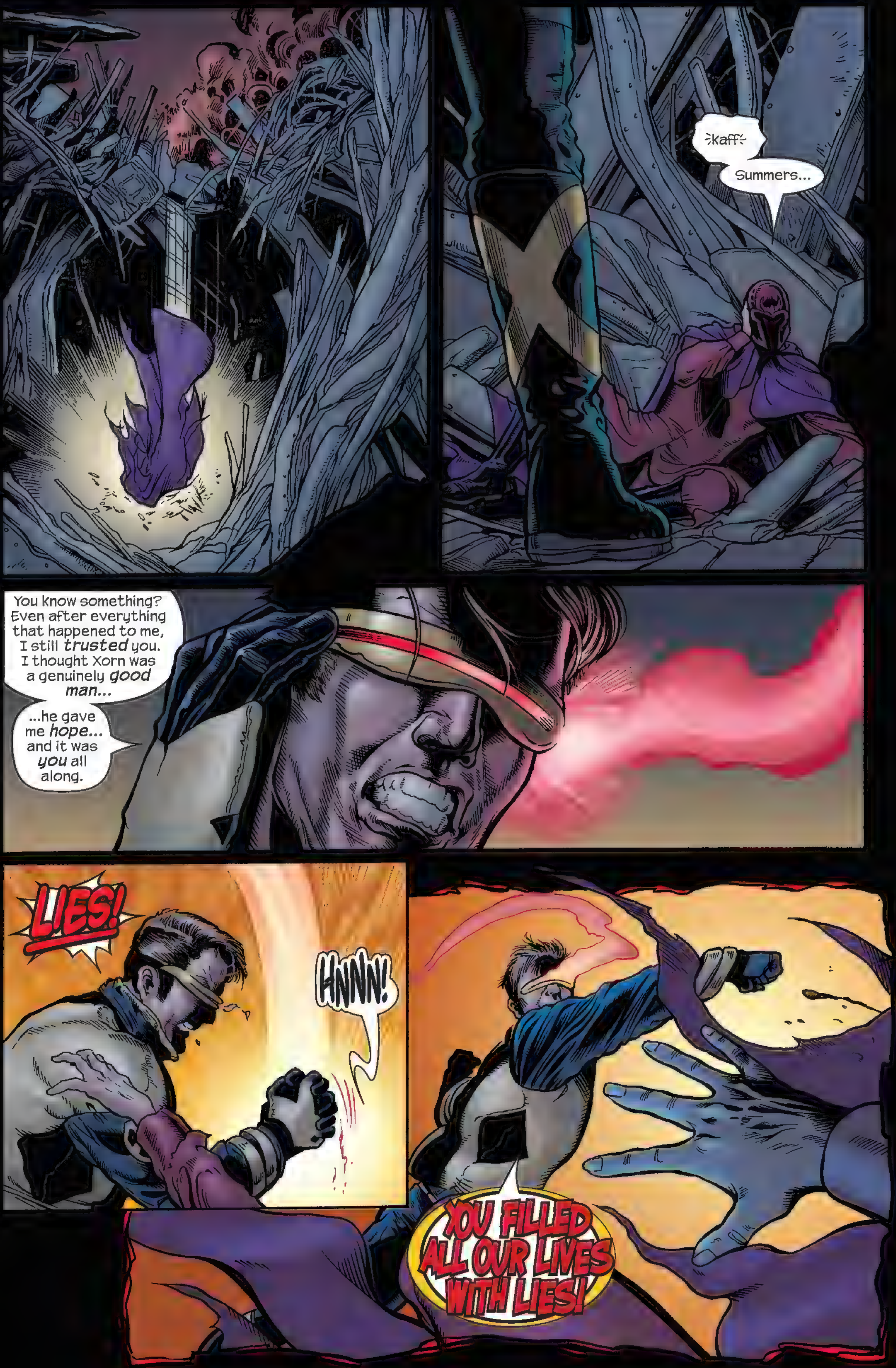

KWWWAAAK!
Well done, boy.
You passed my *test* and returned a *stronger man.*
Brilliant idea to use a *titanium bat* against the Master of Magnetism.
How did you get *in here,* anyway?
Maybe with this *key* you forgot to take away when "*he*" is being sent to his death!
Xavier school is the *best* school!
Pacify him, Esme.
Tt
You pacify him if you're so *great.*
Esme...I'm sorry if I upset you or *misled* you...
Why should I do anything for you *ever again?*
Oh...

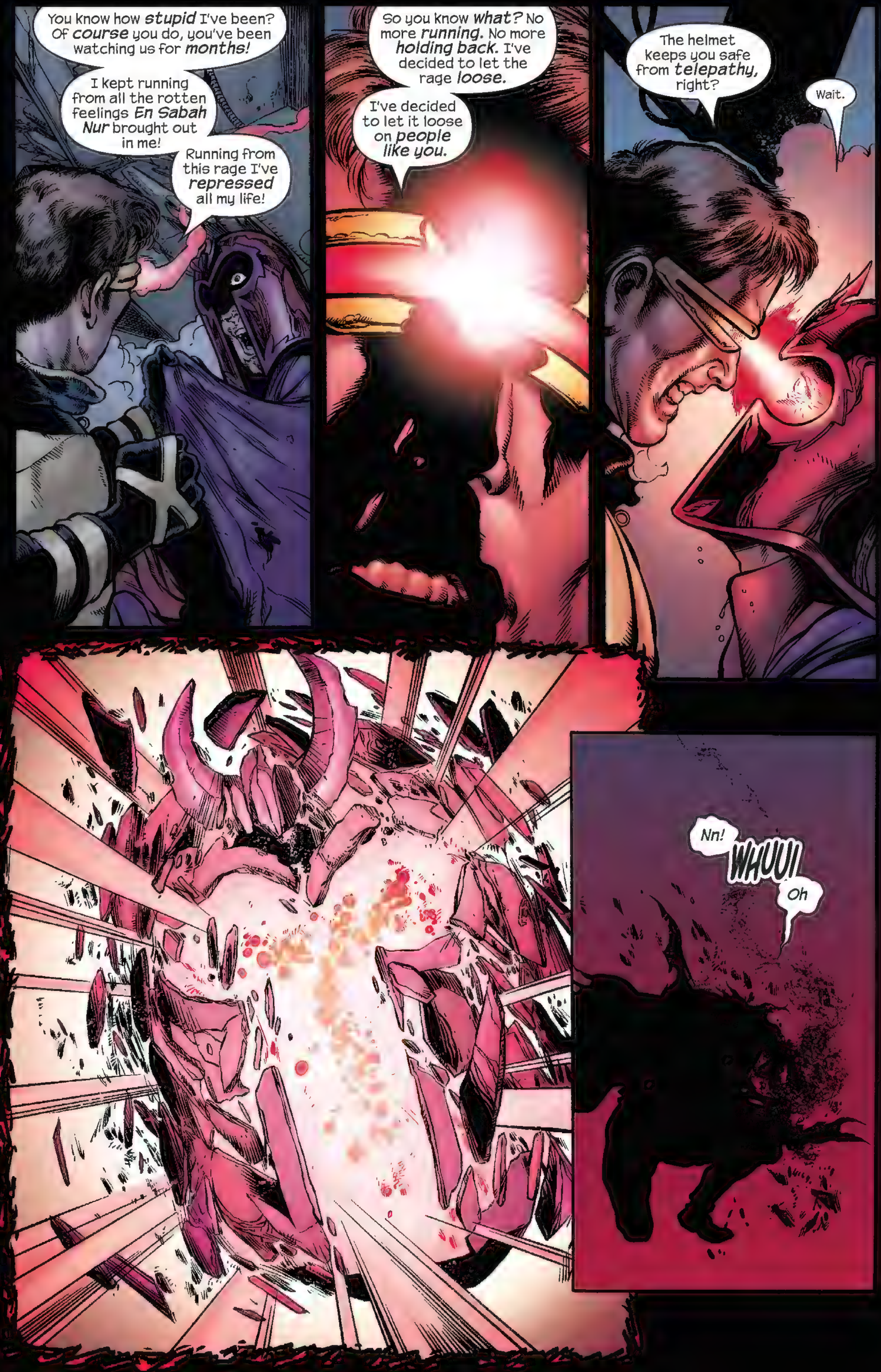

...Weapon Thirteen.
Fantomex.
What now?
Bullets?
E.V.A.
Prepare to retrieve *Professor X.*
CHAAUUR!
Unnnh!
URR!
DESTROY HIM!

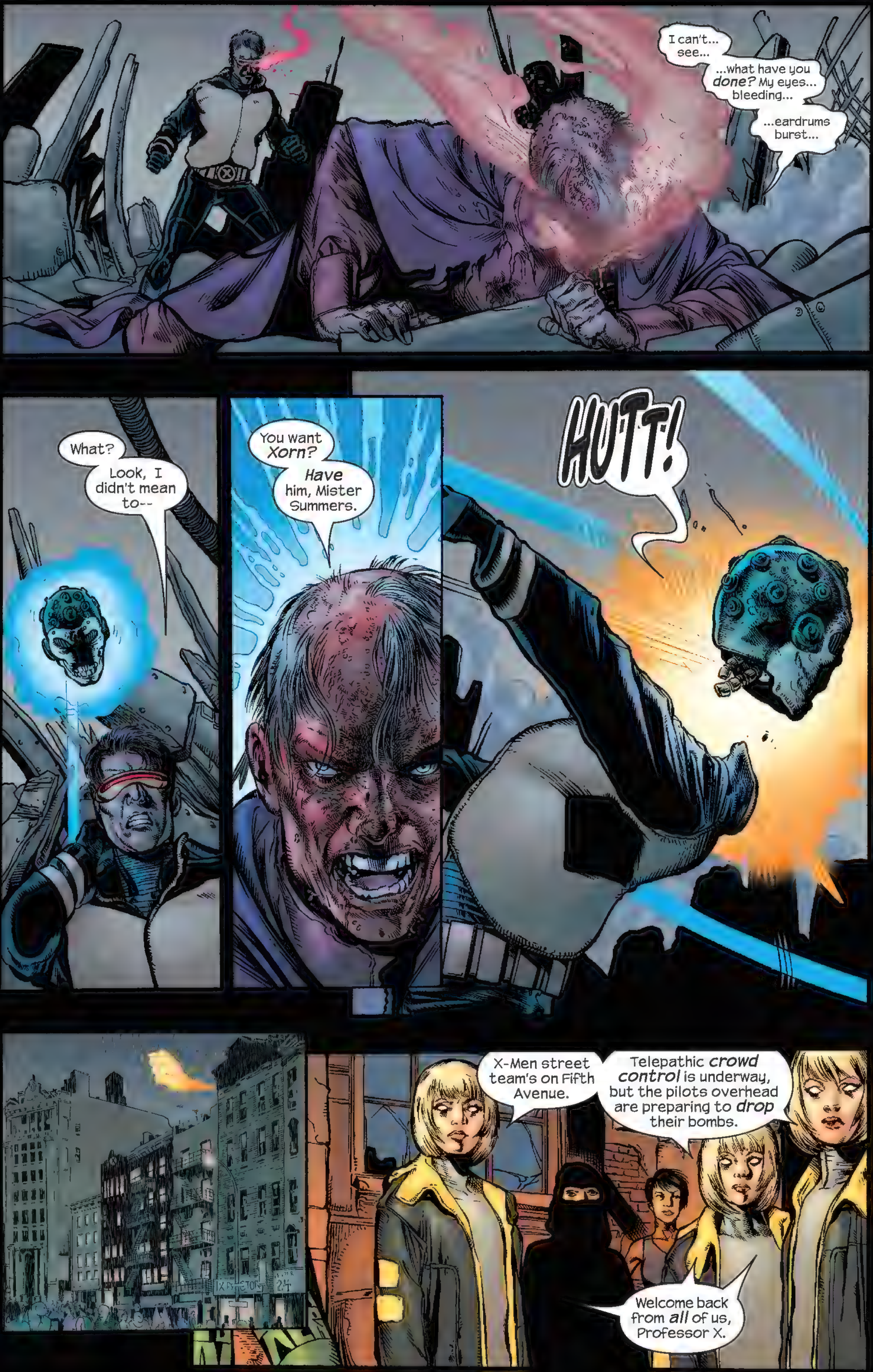

What?
And get ourselves *shot?*
HE'S MINE!
You and *whose* knees?
SPAK!
SPAK!
GGGHAAAUU AUUUUGGHHH FAUUHH!

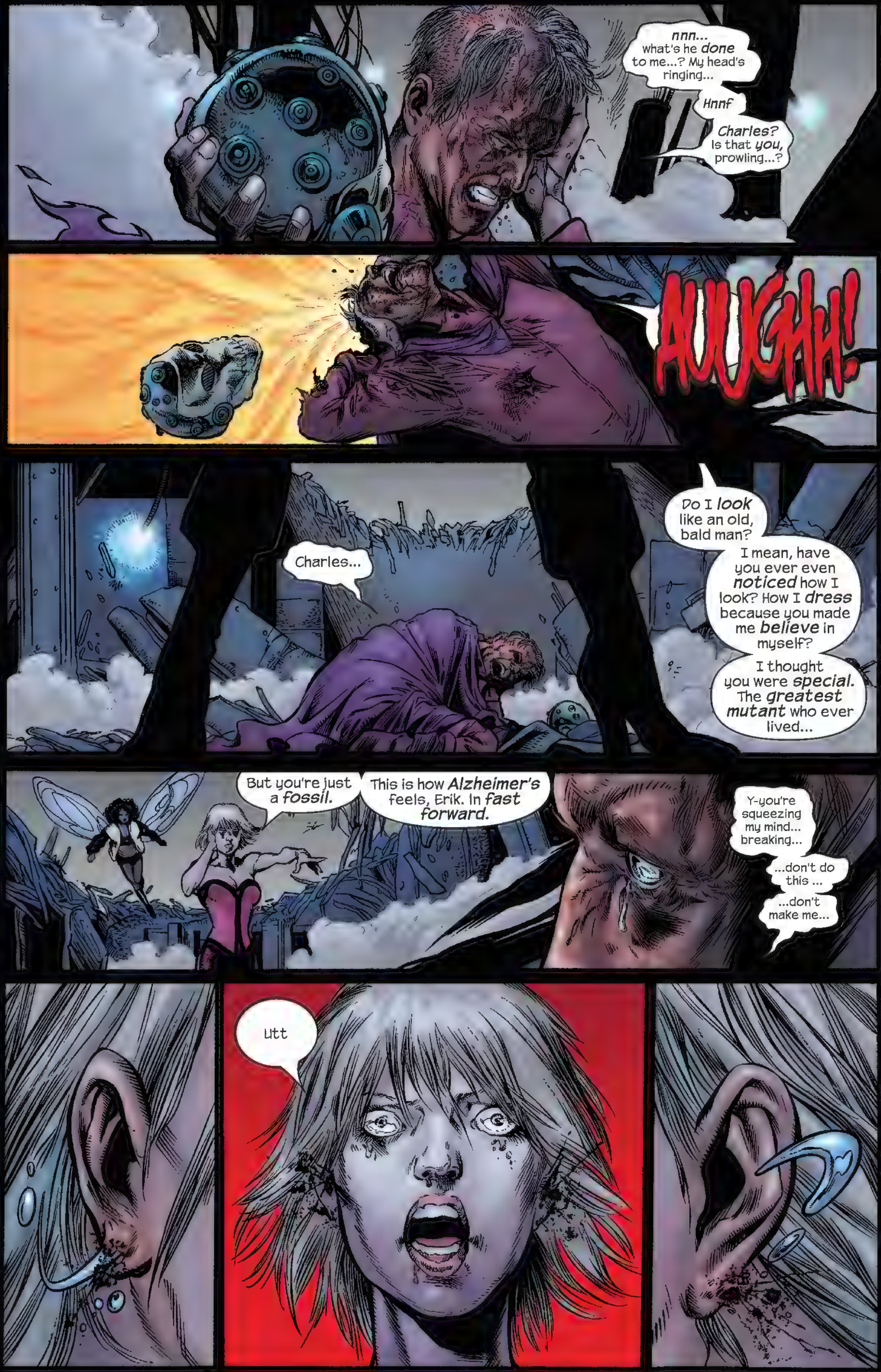

Missed.
AAAUUUU
Is everything you say a cliché?
Die.

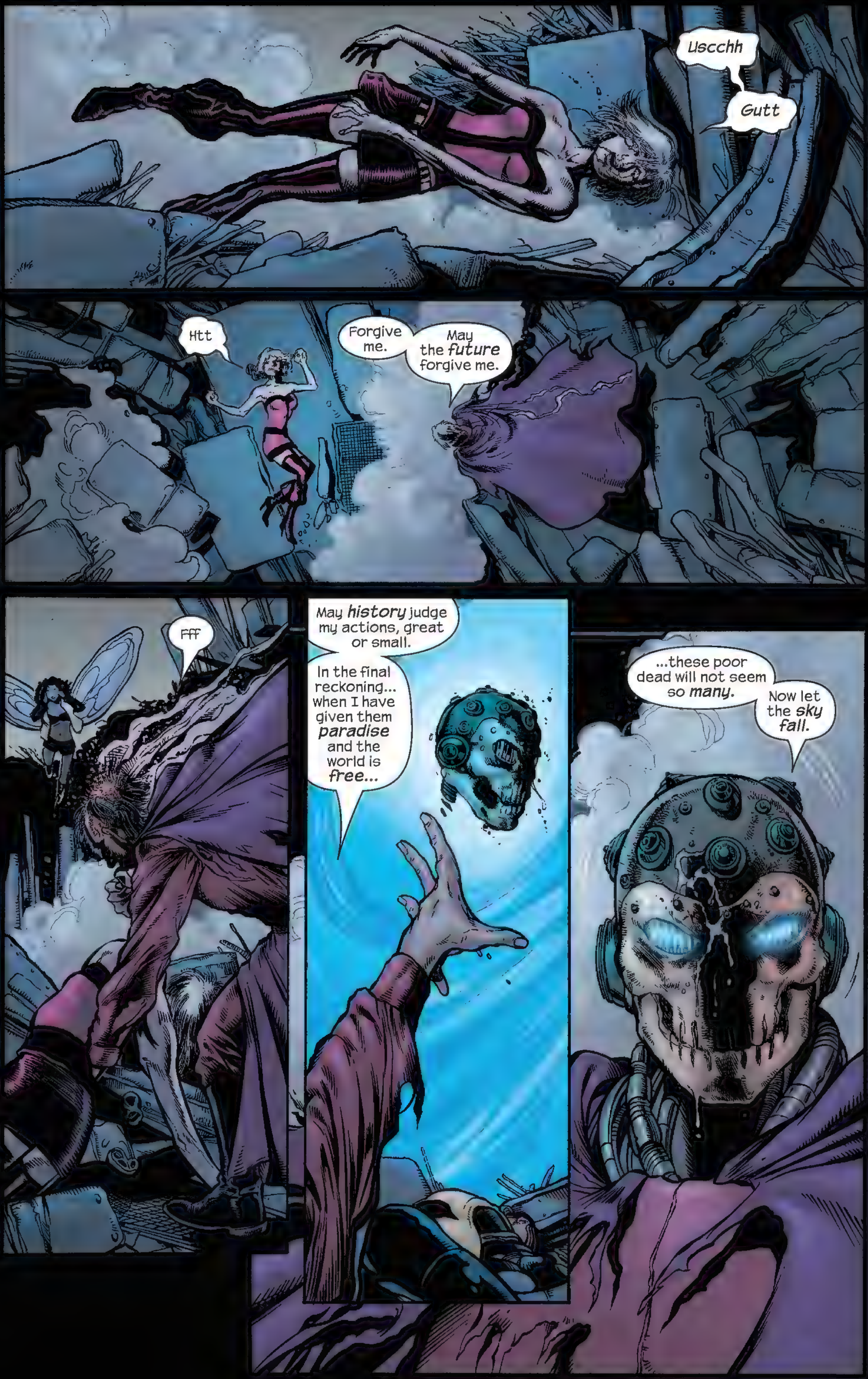

UNN! GGAHH
Uh-oh.
HERE HE COMES!
What next?
Underneath us!
He's...

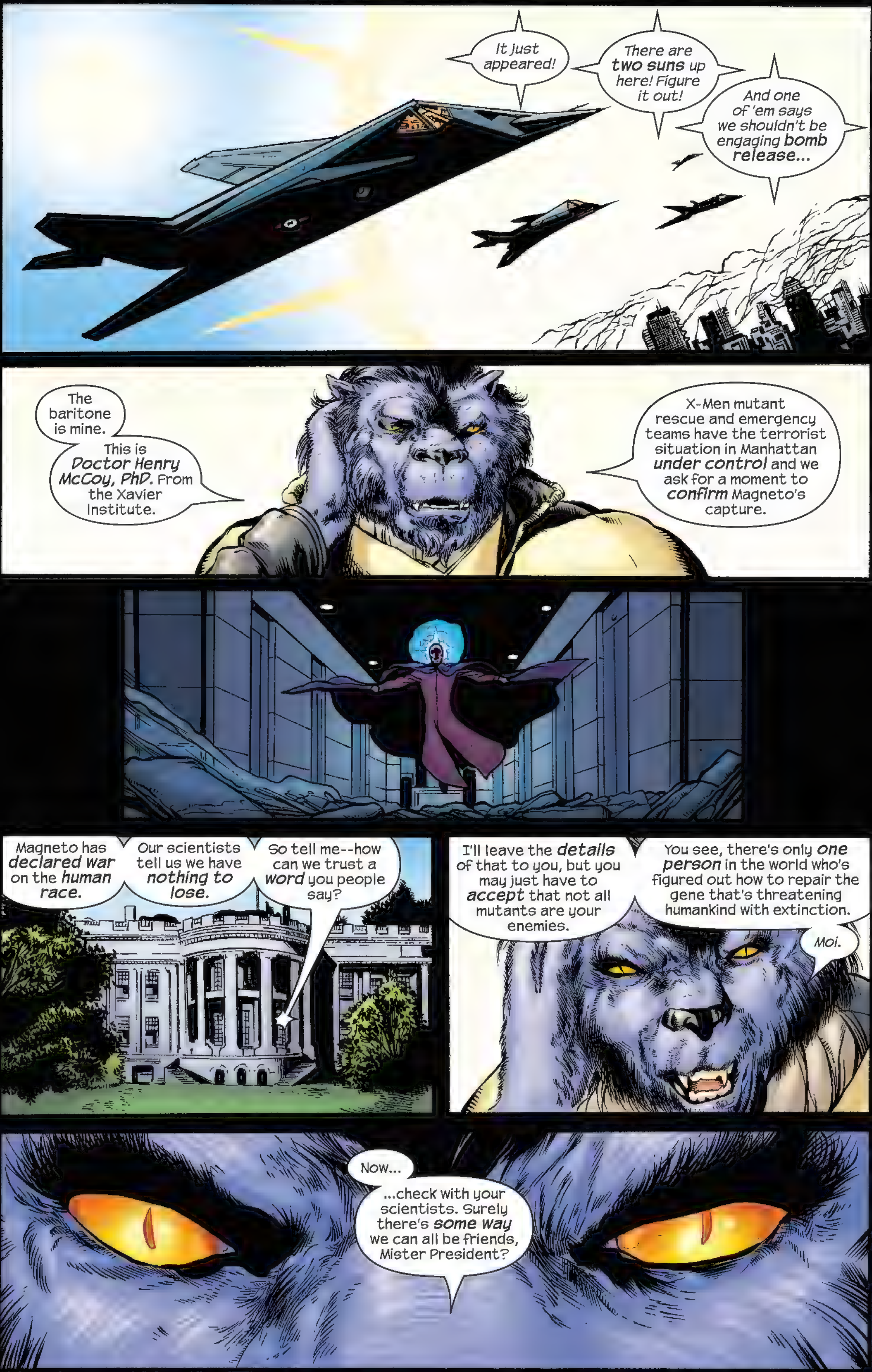

kaff
Summers...
You know something? Even after everything that happened to me, I still *trusted* you. I thought Xorn was a genuinely *good man*...
...he gave me *hope*... and it was *you* all along.
LIES!
HNNN!
YOU FILLED ALL OUR LIVES WITH LIES!

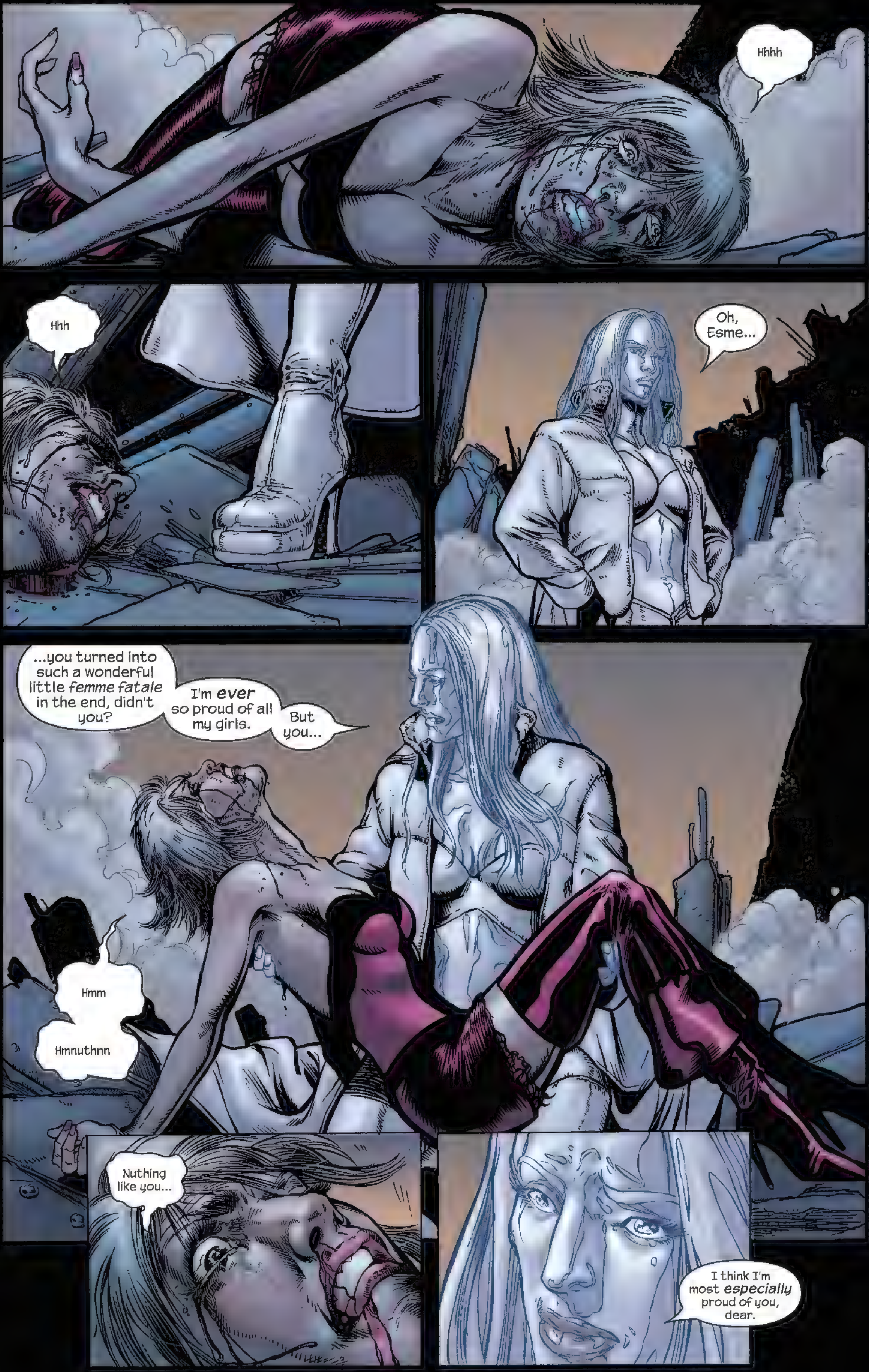

You know how *stupid* I've been? Of *course* you do, you've been watching us for *months!*
I kept running from all the rotten feelings *En Sabah Nur* brought out in me!
Running from this rage I've *repressed* all my life!
So you know *what?* No more *running.* No more *holding back.* I've decided to let the rage *loose.*
I've decided to let it loose on *people like you.*
The helmet keeps you safe from *telepathy,* right?
Wait.
Nn!
WHUUI
Oh

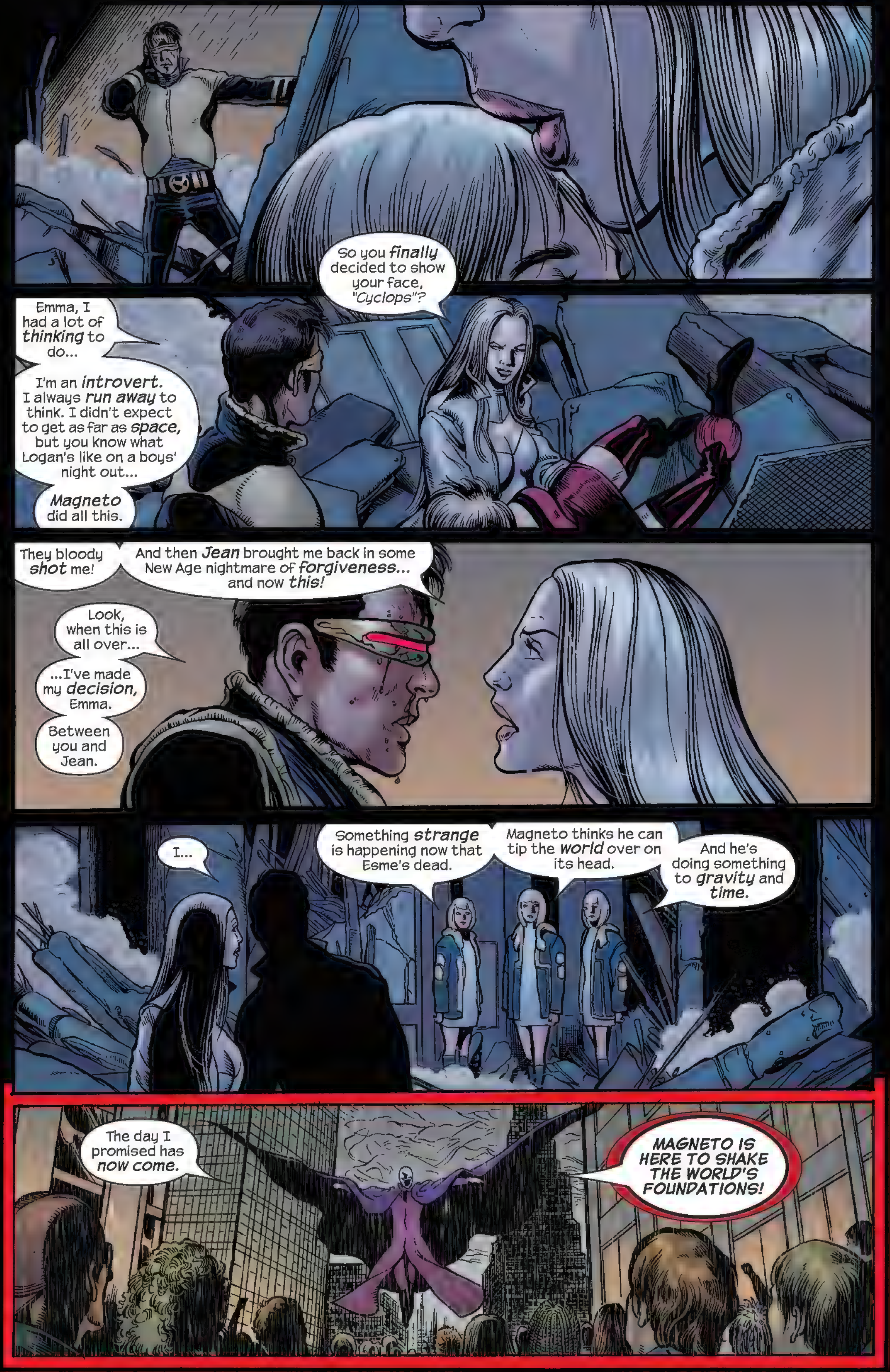

I can't... see...
...what have you *done?* My eyes... bleeding...
...eardrums burst...
What? Look, I didn't mean to--
You want *Xorn?* *Have* him, Mister Summers.
HUTT!
X-Men street team's on Fifth Avenue.
Telepathic *crowd control* is underway, but the pilots overhead are preparing to *drop* their bombs.
Welcome back from *all* of us, Professor X.

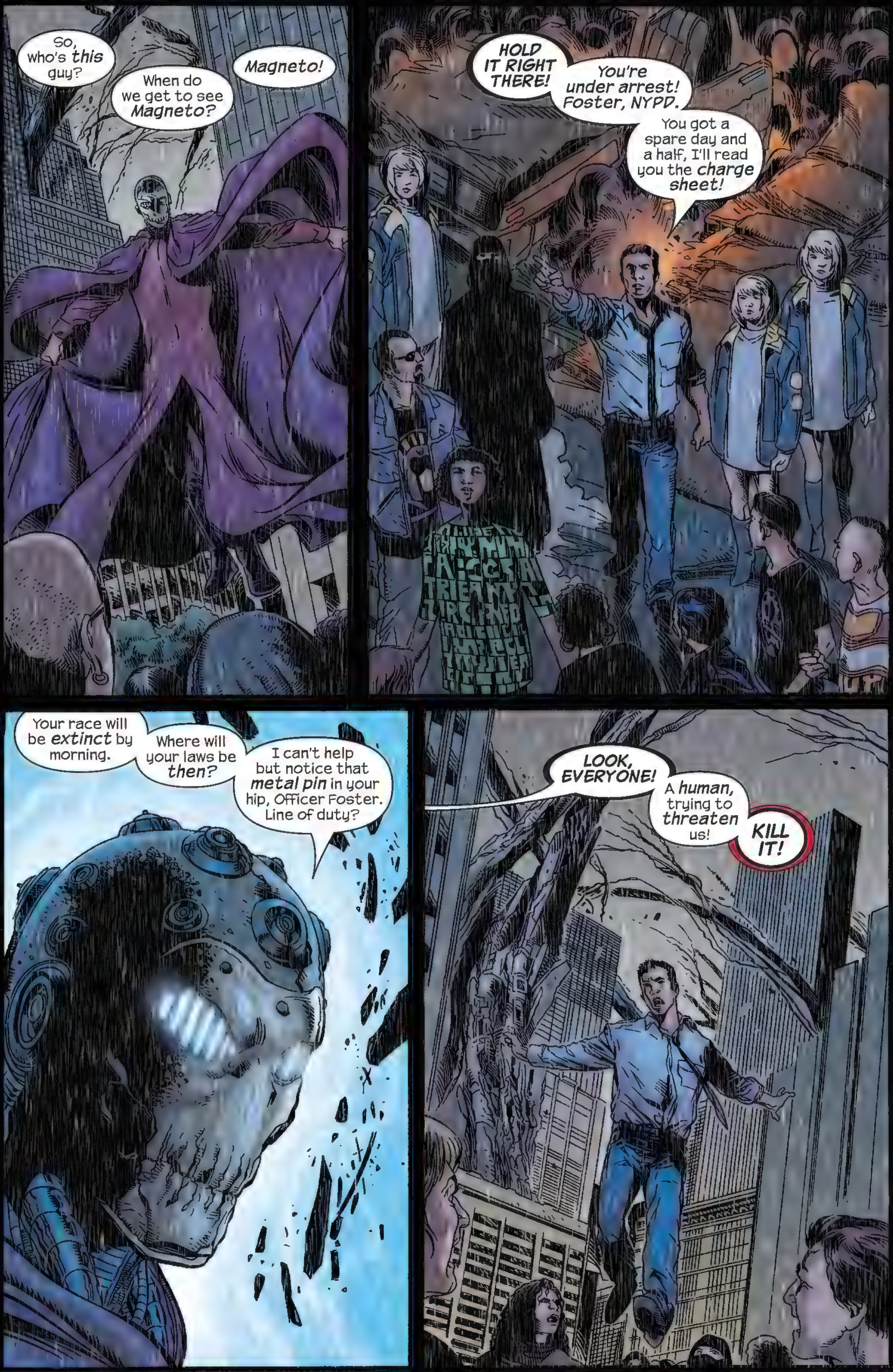

nnn... what's he done to me...? My head's ringing...
Hnnf
Charles? Is that you, prowling...?
AUUGHH!
Charles...
Do I look like an old, bald man?
I mean, have you ever even noticed how I look? How I dress because you made me believe in myself?
I thought you were special. The greatest mutant who ever lived...
But you're just a fossil.
This is how Alzheimer's feels, Erik. In fast forward.
Y-you're squeezing my mind... breaking...
...don't do this ...
...don't make me...
Utt

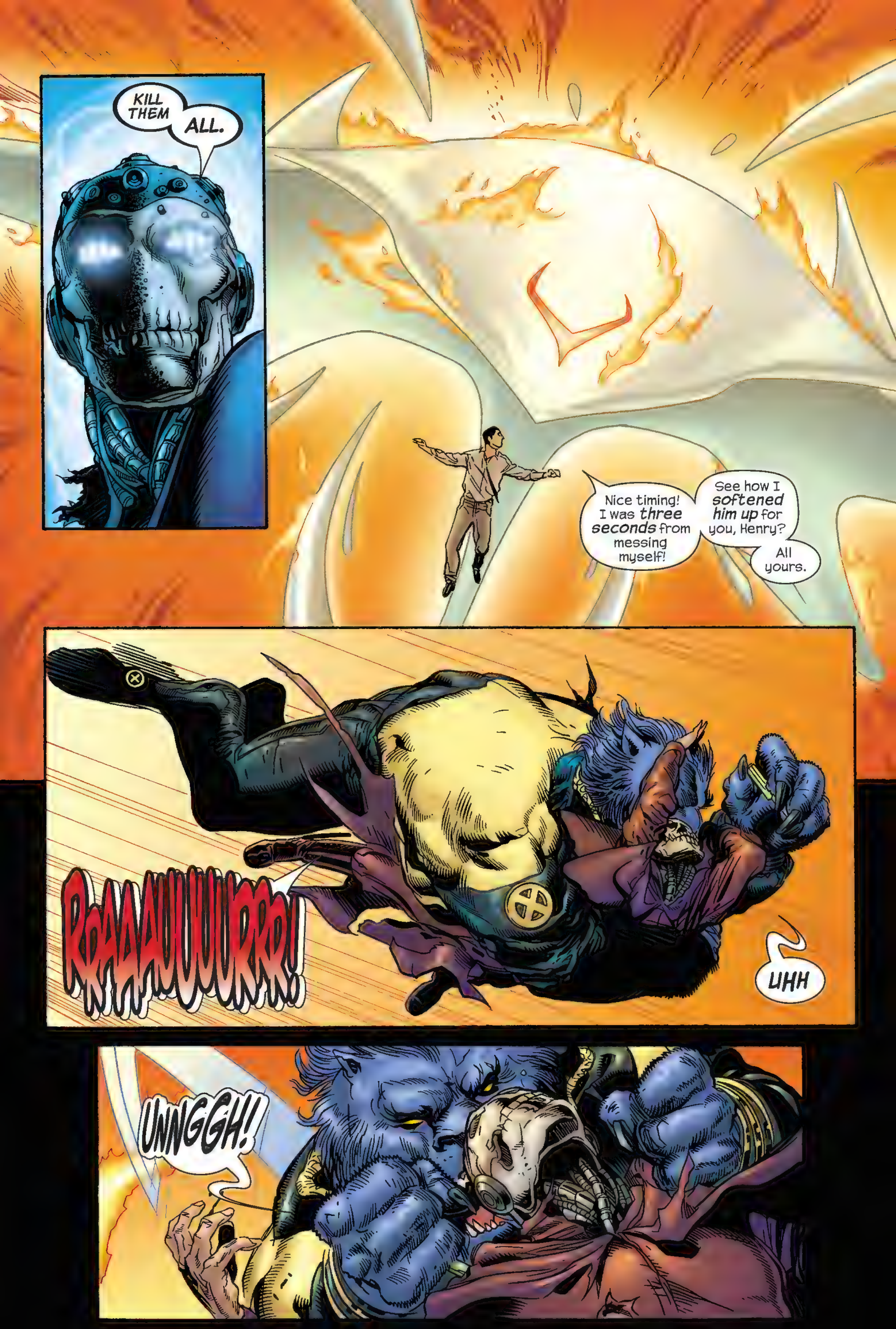

Uscchh
Gutt
Htt
Forgive me.
May the *future* forgive me.
Fff
May *history* judge my actions, great or small.
In the final reckoning... when I have given them *paradise* and the world is *free...*
...these poor dead will not seem so *many.*
Now let the *sky fall.*

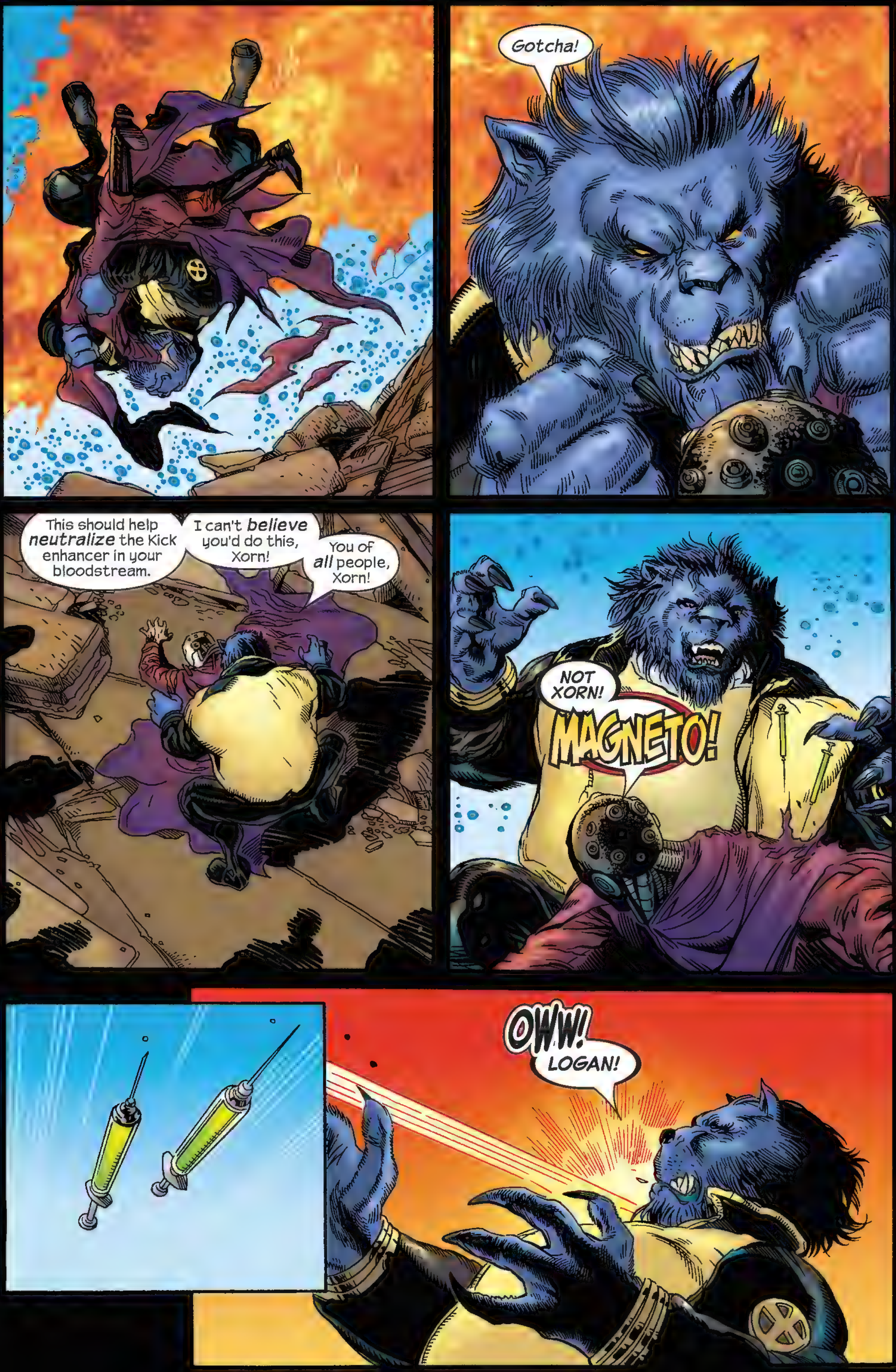

It just appeared!
There are two suns up here! Figure it out!
And one of 'em says we shouldn't be engaging bomb release...
The baritone is mine.
This is Doctor Henry McCoy, PhD. From the Xavier Institute.
X-Men mutant rescue and emergency teams have the terrorist situation in Manhattan under control and we ask for a moment to confirm Magneto's capture.
Magneto has declared war on the human race.
Our scientists tell us we have nothing to lose.
So tell me--how can we trust a word you people say?
I'll leave the details of that to you, but you may just have to accept that not all mutants are your enemies.
You see, there's only one person in the world who's figured out how to repair the gene that's threatening humankind with extinction.
Moi.
Now...
...check with your scientists. Surely there's some way we can all be friends, Mister President?

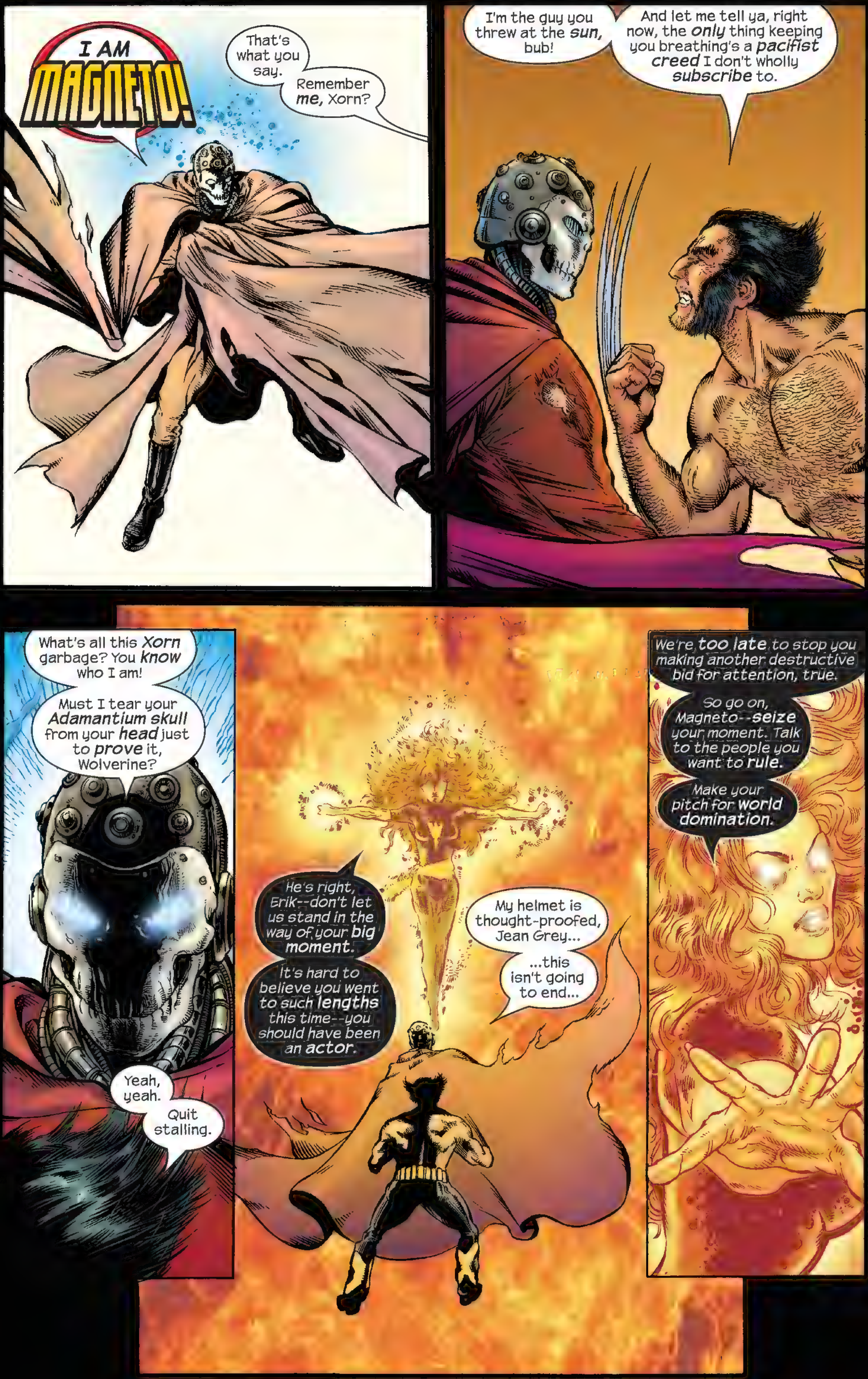

Hhhh
Hhh
Oh, Esme...
...you turned into such a wonderful little *femme fatale* in the end, didn't you?
I'm *ever* so proud of all my girls.
But you...
Hmm
Hmnuthnn
Nuthing like you...
I think I'm most *especially* proud of you, dear.

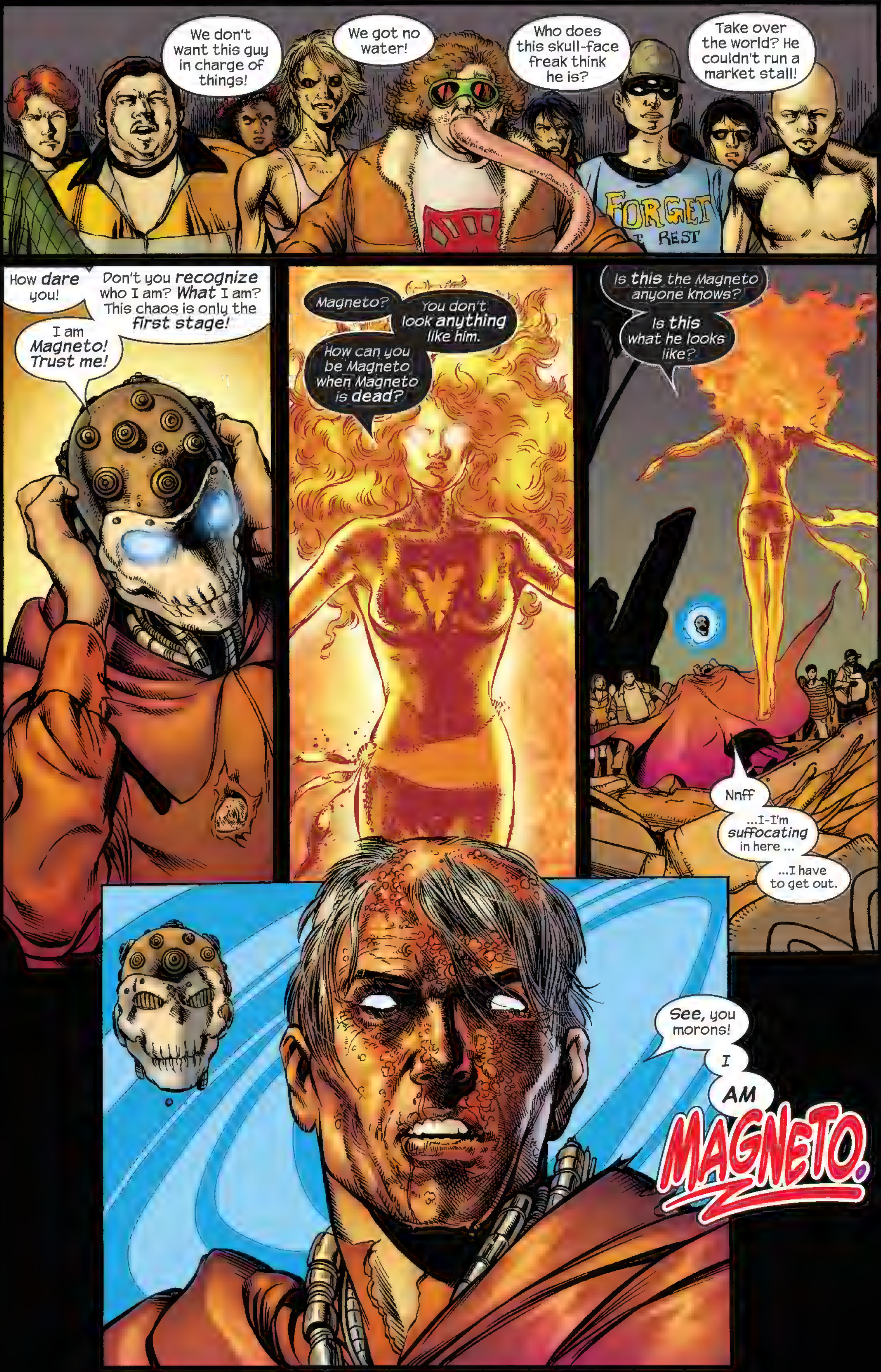

So you *finally* decided to show your face, *"Cyclops"*?
Emma, I had a lot of *thinking* to do...
I'm an *introvert.* I always *run away* to think. I didn't expect to get as far as *space,* but you know what Logan's like on a boys' night out...
Magneto did all this.
They bloody *shot* me!
And then *Jean* brought me back in some New Age nightmare of *forgiveness...* and now *this!*
Look, when this is all over...
...I've made my *decision,* Emma.
Between you and Jean.
I...
Something *strange* is happening now that Esme's dead.
Magneto thinks he can tip the *world* over on its head.
And he's doing something to *gravity* and *time.*
The day I promised has *now come.*
MAGNETO IS HERE TO SHAKE THE WORLD'S FOUNDATIONS!

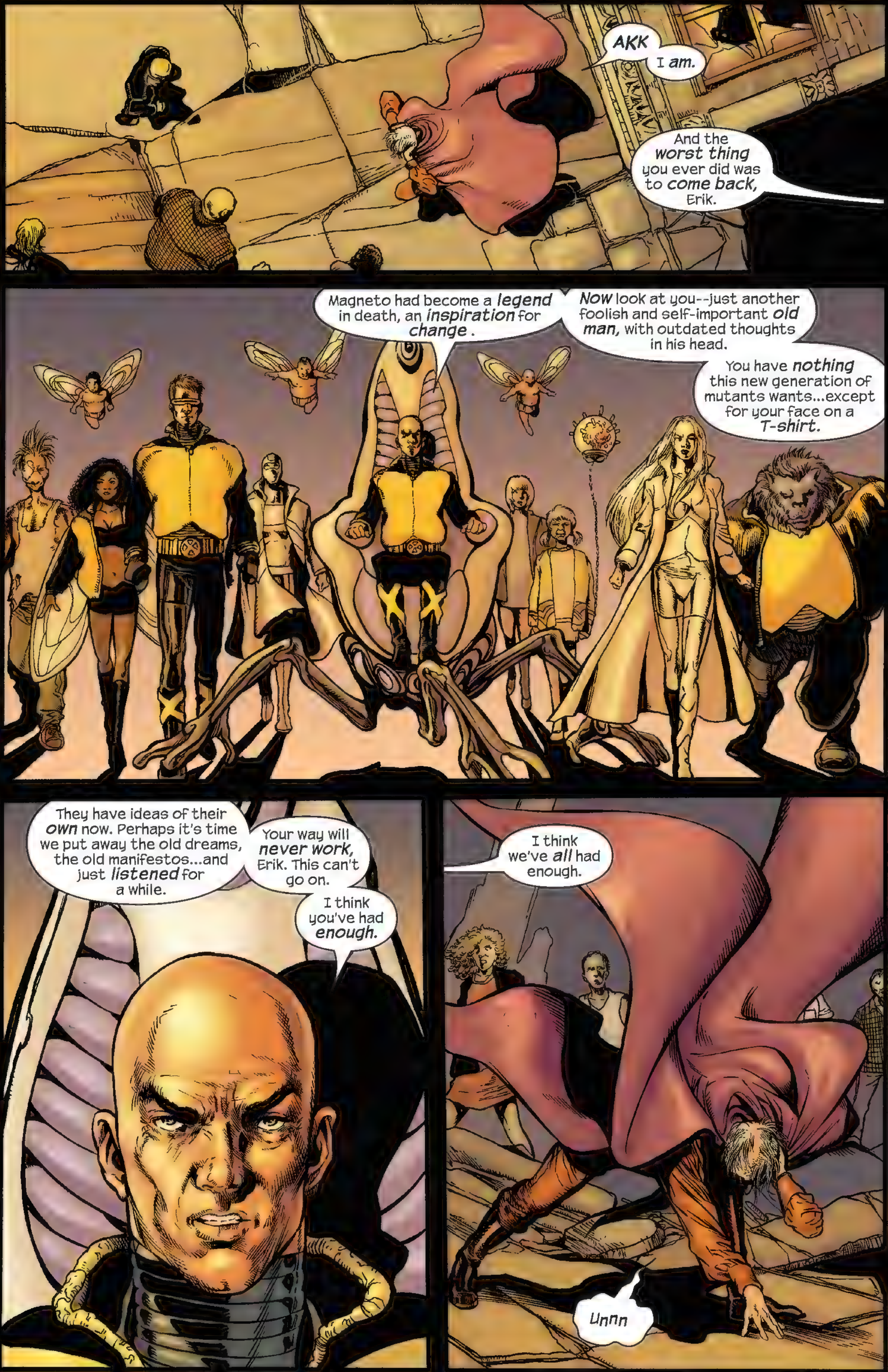

So, who's *this* guy?
When do we get to see *Magneto?*
Magneto!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
You're *under arrest!* Foster, NYPD.
You got a spare day and a half, I'll read you the *charge sheet!*
Your race will be *extinct* by morning.
Where will your laws be *then?*
I can't help but notice that *metal pin* in your hip, Officer Foster. Line of duty?
LOOK, EVERYONE!
A *human,* trying to *threaten* us!
KILL IT!

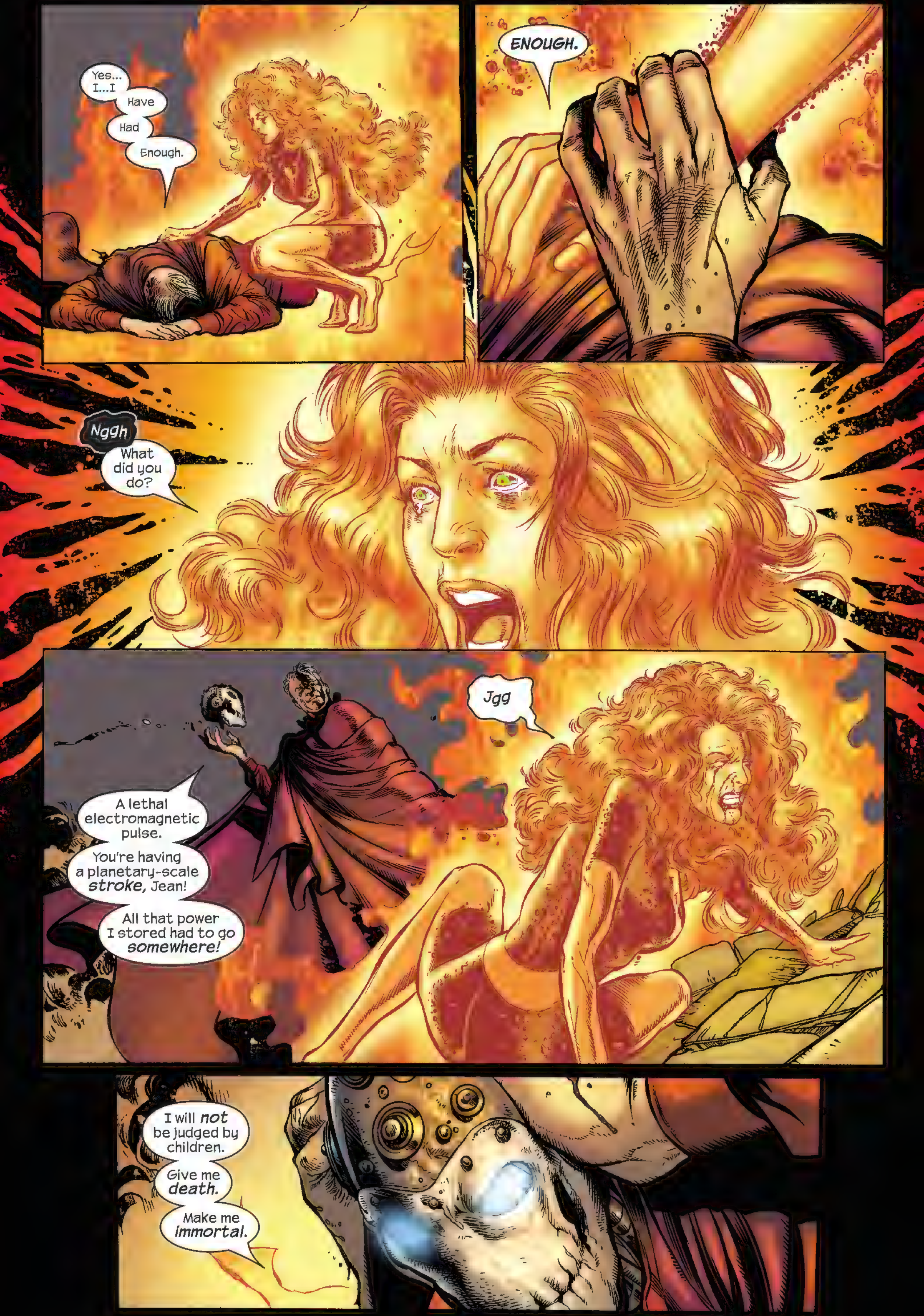

KILL THEM
ALL.
Nice timing! I was three seconds from messing myself!
See how I softened him up for you, Henry?
All yours.
RRAAAUUUURRR!
UHH
UNNGGH!

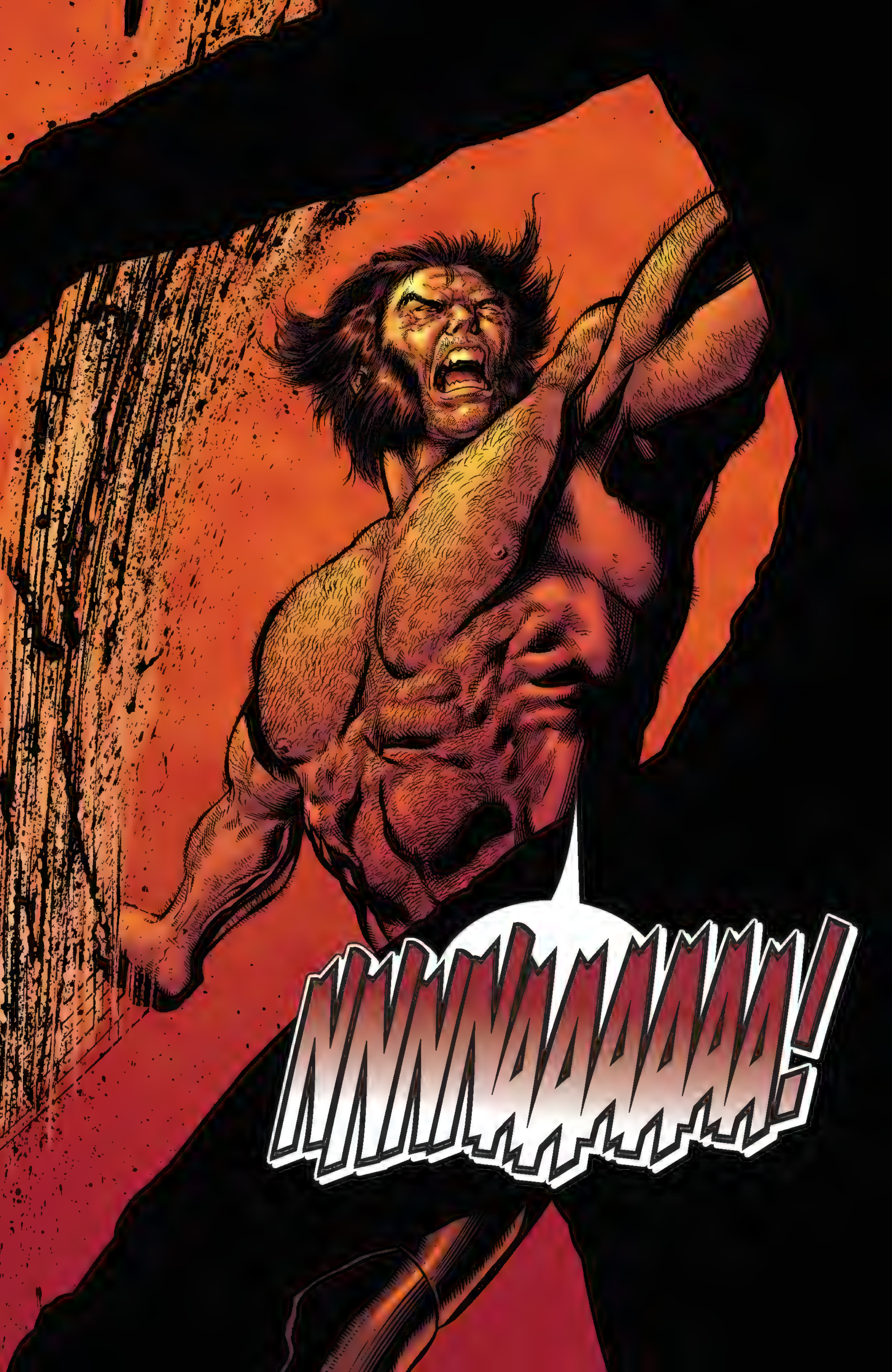

Gotcha!
This should help *neutralize* the Kick enhancer in your bloodstream.
I can't *believe* you'd do this, Xorn!
You of *all* people, Xorn!
NOT XORN!
MAGNETO!
OWW!
LOGAN!

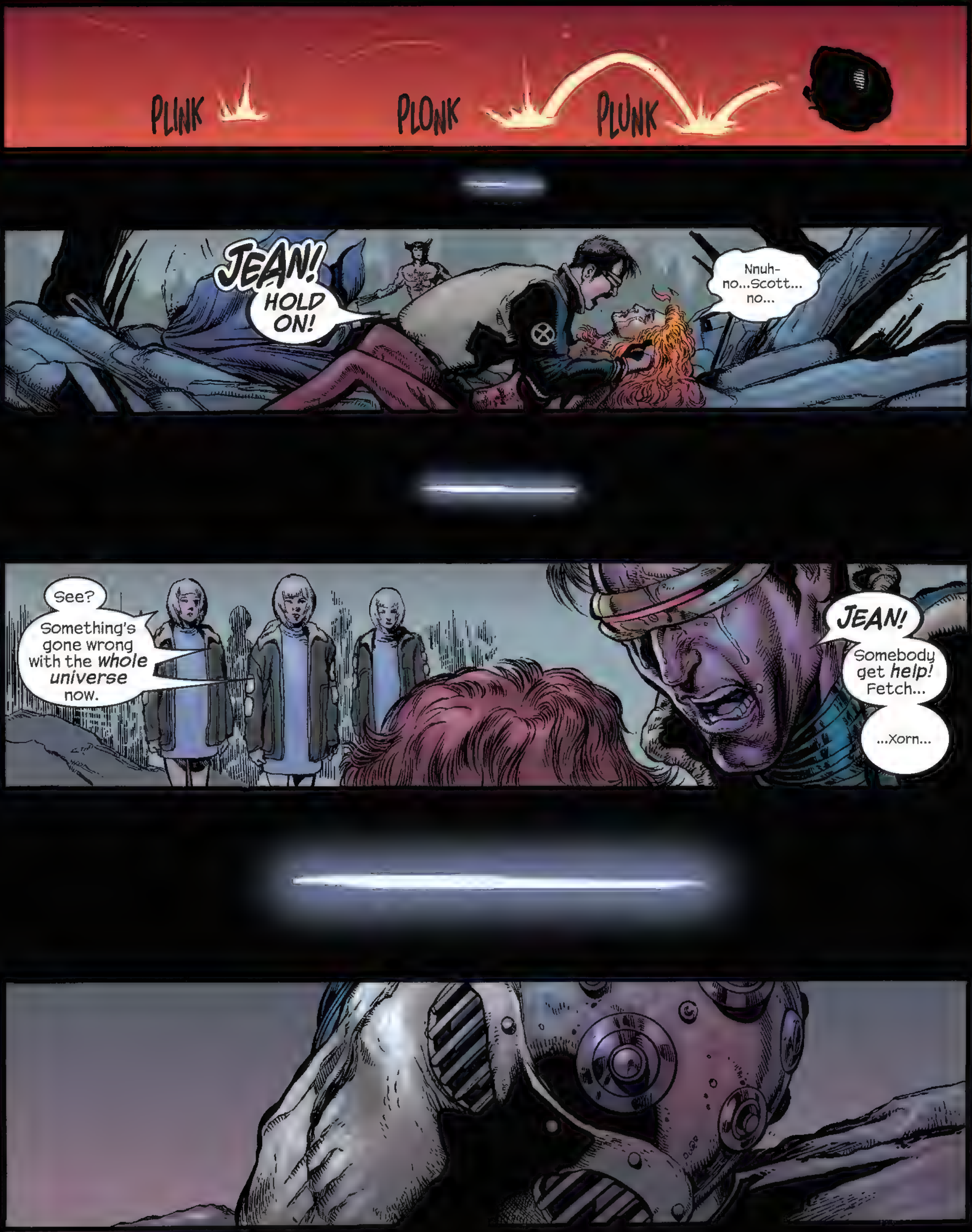

I AM MAGNETO!
That's what you say.
Remember me, Xorn?
I'm the guy you threw at the sun, bub!
And let me tell ya, right now, the only thing keeping you breathing's a pacifist creed I don't wholly subscribe to.
What's all this Xorn garbage? You know who I am!
Must I tear your Adamantium skull from your head just to prove it, Wolverine?
Yeah, yeah.
Quit stalling.
He's right, Erik--don't let us stand in the way of your big moment.
It's hard to believe you went to such lengths this time--you should have been an actor.
My helmet is thought-proofed, Jean Grey...
...this isn't going to end...
We're too late to stop you making another destructive bid for attention, true.
So go on, Magneto--seize your moment. Talk to the people you want to rule.
Make your pitch for world domination.

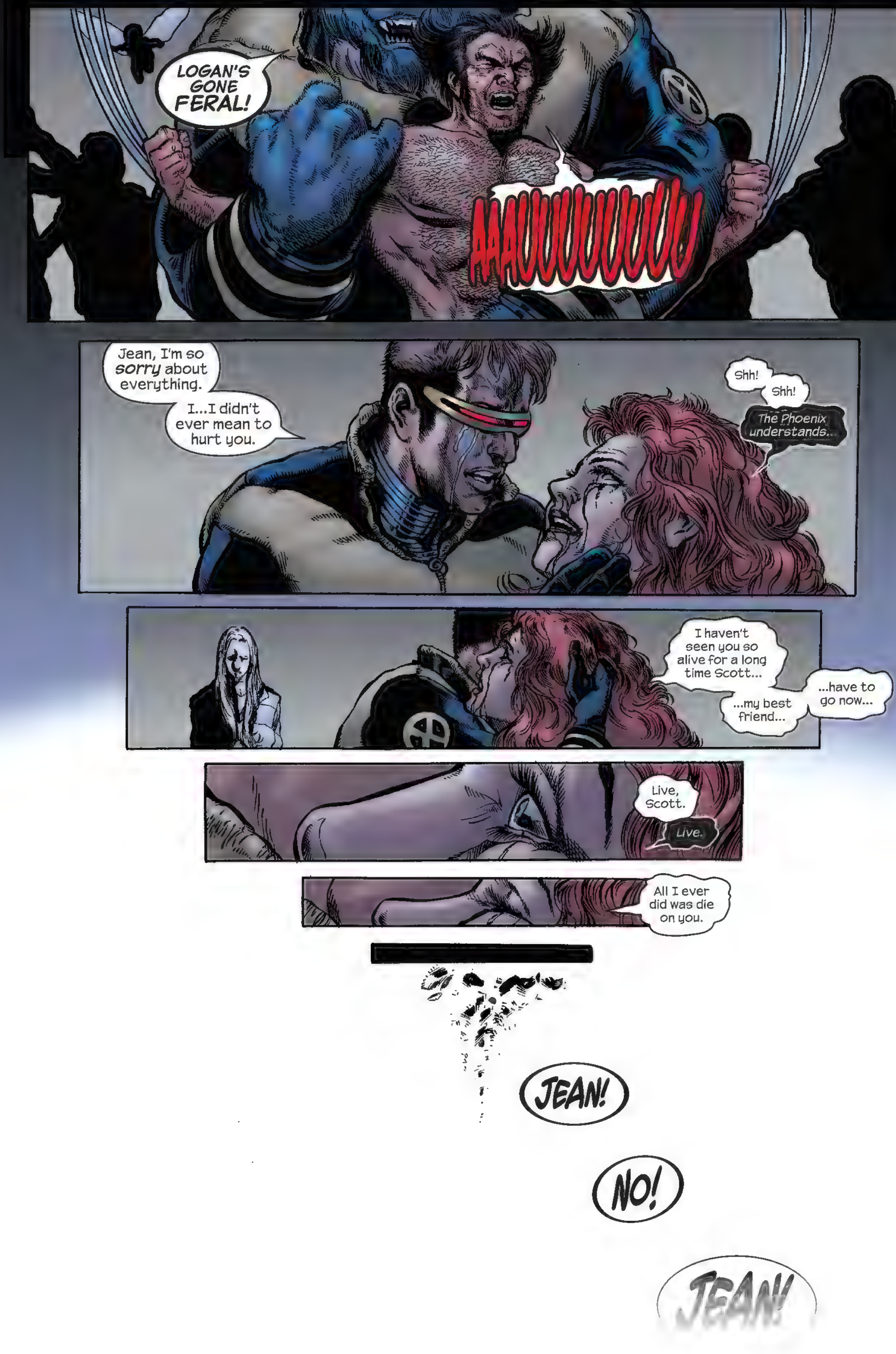

We don't want this guy in charge of things!
We got no water!
Who does this skull-face freak think he is?
Take over the world? He couldn't run a market stall!
FORGET
REST
How dare you!
Don't you recognize who I am? What I am? This chaos is only the first stage!
I am Magneto! Trust me!
Magneto?
You don't look anything like him.
How can you be Magneto when Magneto is dead?
Is this the Magneto anyone knows?
Is this what he looks like?
Nnff
...I-I'm suffocating in here ...
...I have to get out.
See, you morons!
I
AM
MAGNETO.

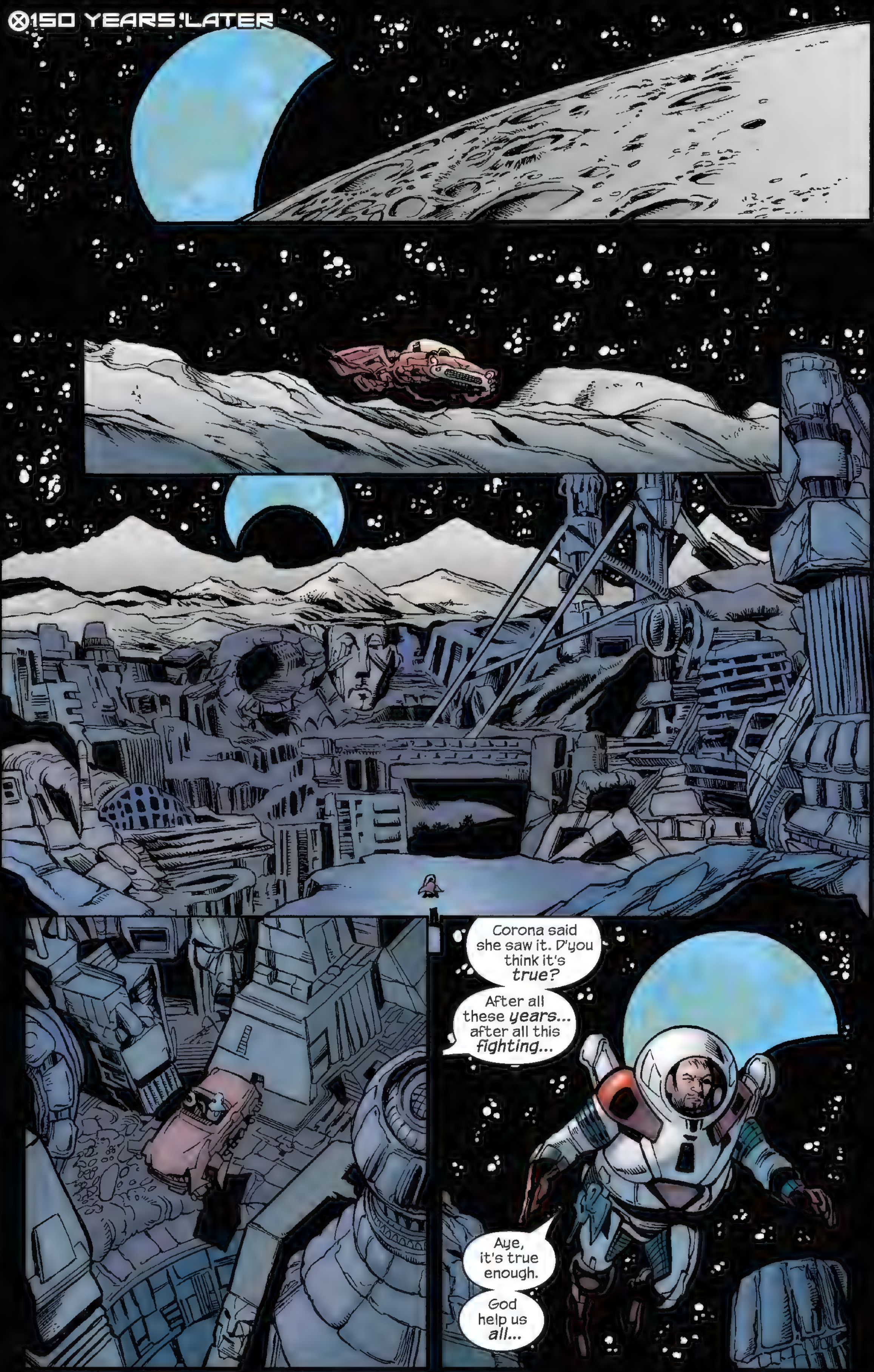

AKK
I am.
And the worst thing you ever did was to come back, Erik.
Magneto had become a legend in death, an inspiration for change.
Now look at you--just another foolish and self-important old man, with outdated thoughts in his head.
You have nothing this new generation of mutants wants...except for your face on a T-shirt.
They have ideas of their own now. Perhaps it's time we put away the old dreams, the old manifestos...and just listened for a while.
Your way will never work, Erik. This can't go on.
I think you've had enough.
I think we've all had enough.
Unnn

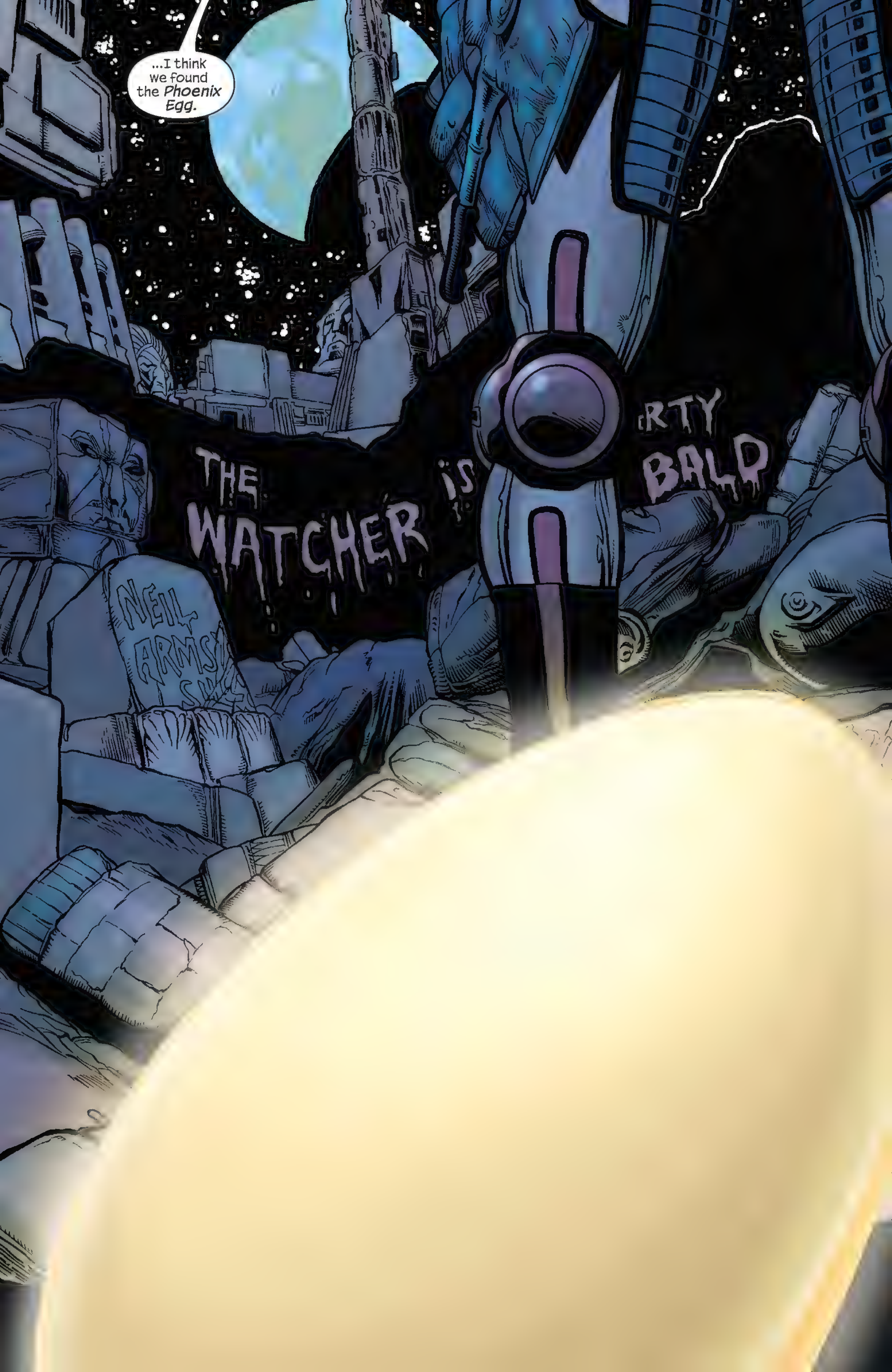

Yes... I...I Have Had Enough.
ENOUGH.
Nggh
What did you do?
Jgg
A lethal electromagnetic pulse.
You're having a planetary-scale *stroke*, Jean!
All that power I stored had to go *somewhere!*
I will *not* be judged by children.
Give me *death.*
Make me *immortal.*

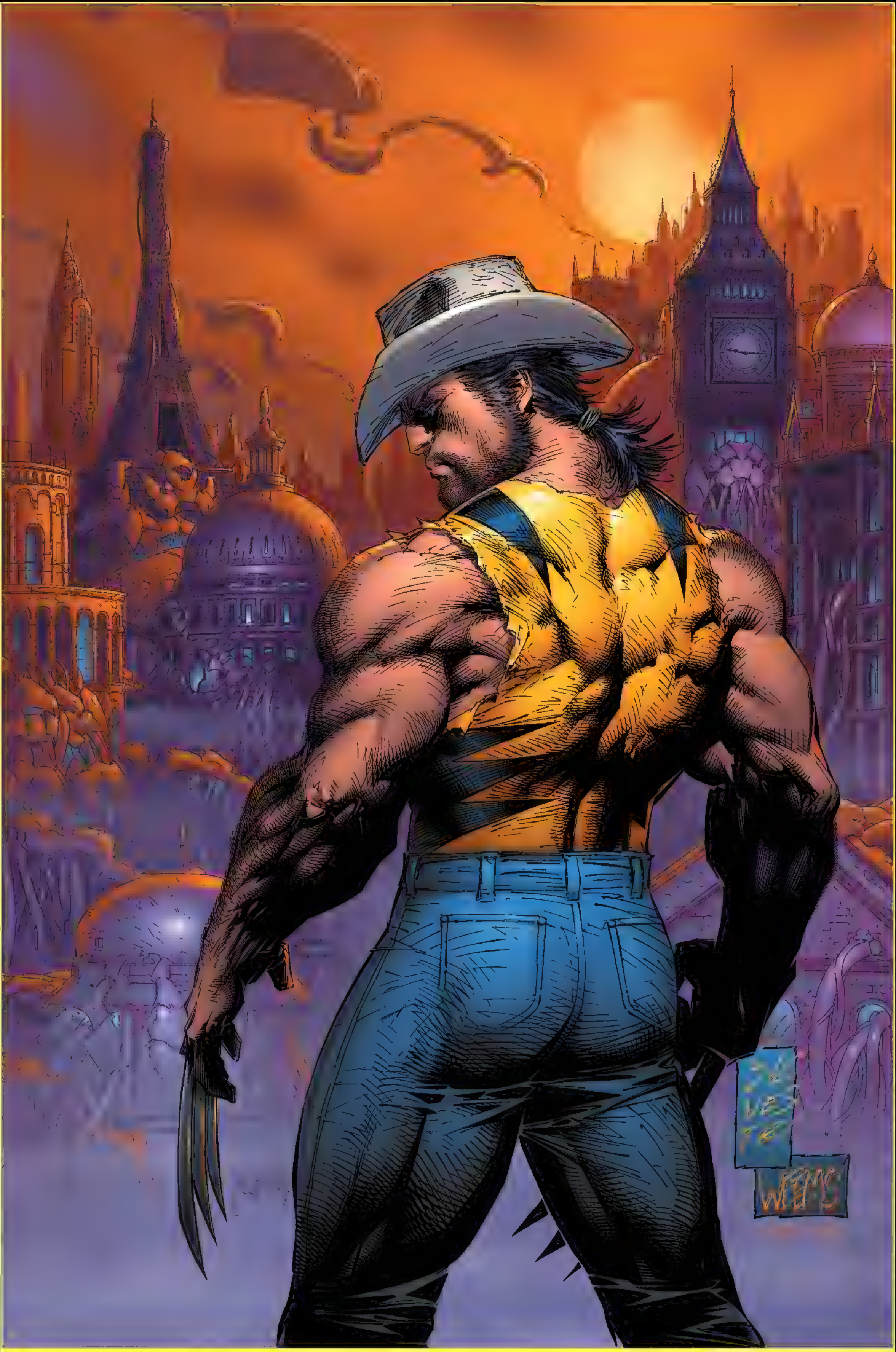

NNNNAAAAAAA!


PLINK
PLONK
PLUNK
JEAN! HOLD ON!
Nnuh-no...Scott... no...
See? Something's gone wrong with the *whole universe* now.
JEAN!
Somebody get *help!* Fetch...
...Xorn...

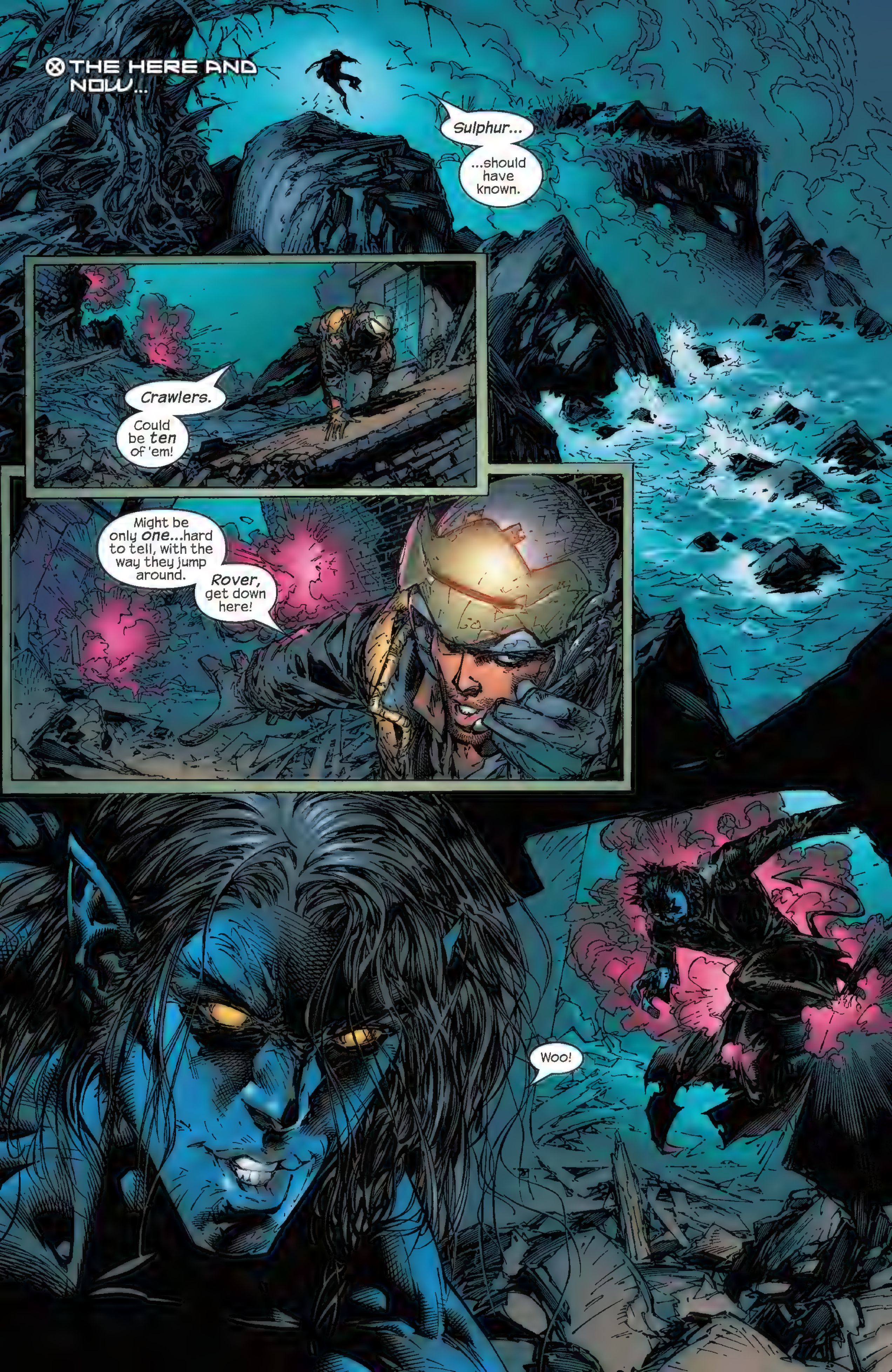

LOGAN'S GONE FERAL!
AAAUUUUUUUU
Jean, I'm so sorry about everything.
I...I didn't ever mean to hurt you.
Shh!
Shh!
The Phoenix understands...
I haven't seen you so alive for a long time Scott...
...my best friend...
...have to go now...
Live, Scott.
Live.
All I ever did was die on you.
JEAN!
NO!
JEAN!

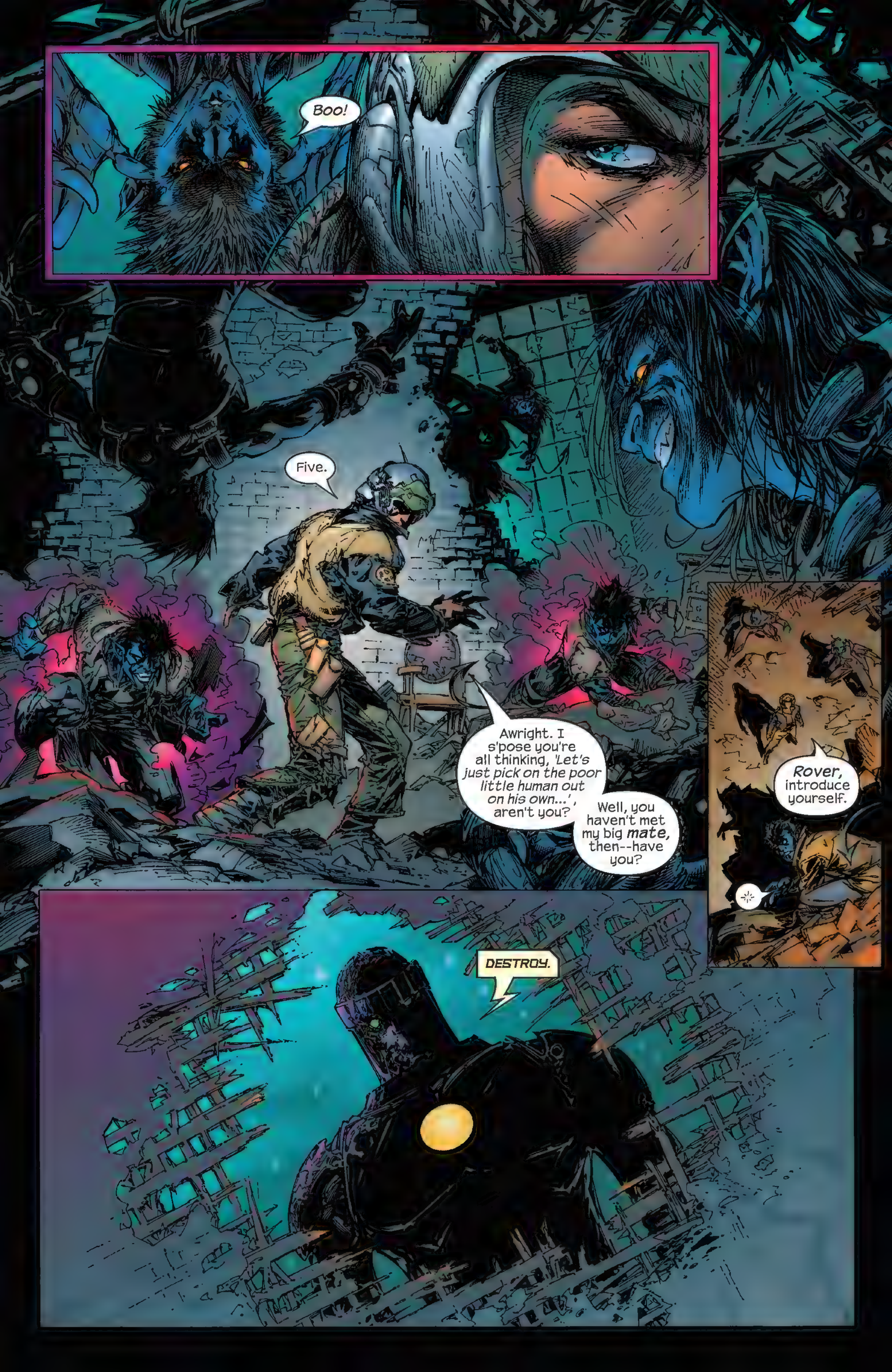

150 YEARS LATER
Corona said she saw it. D'you think it's *true?*
After all these *years*... after all this *fighting*...
Aye, it's true enough.
God help us *all*...

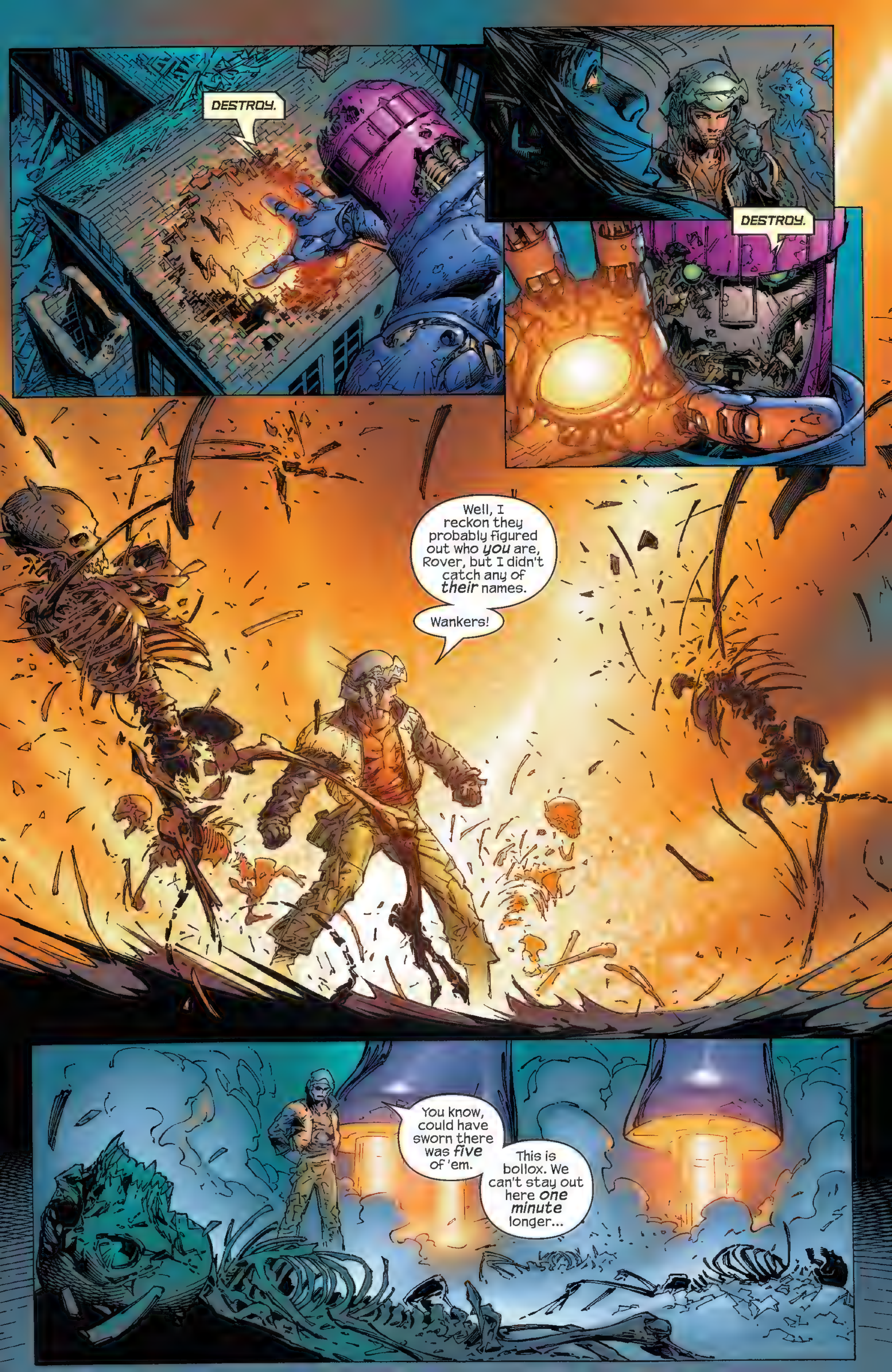

...I think we found the *Phoenix Egg.*
THE WATCHER IS RTY BALD
NEIL ARMS

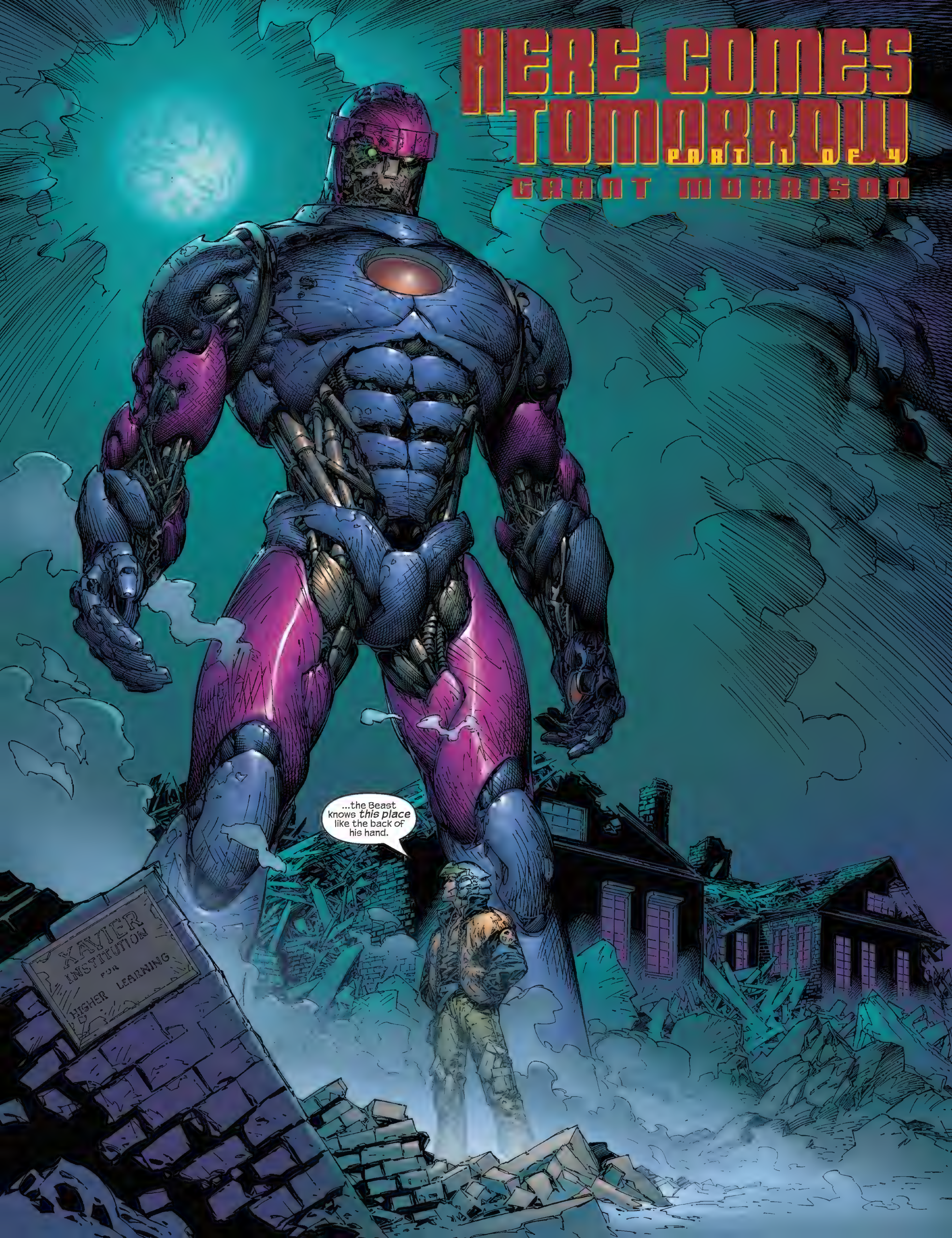


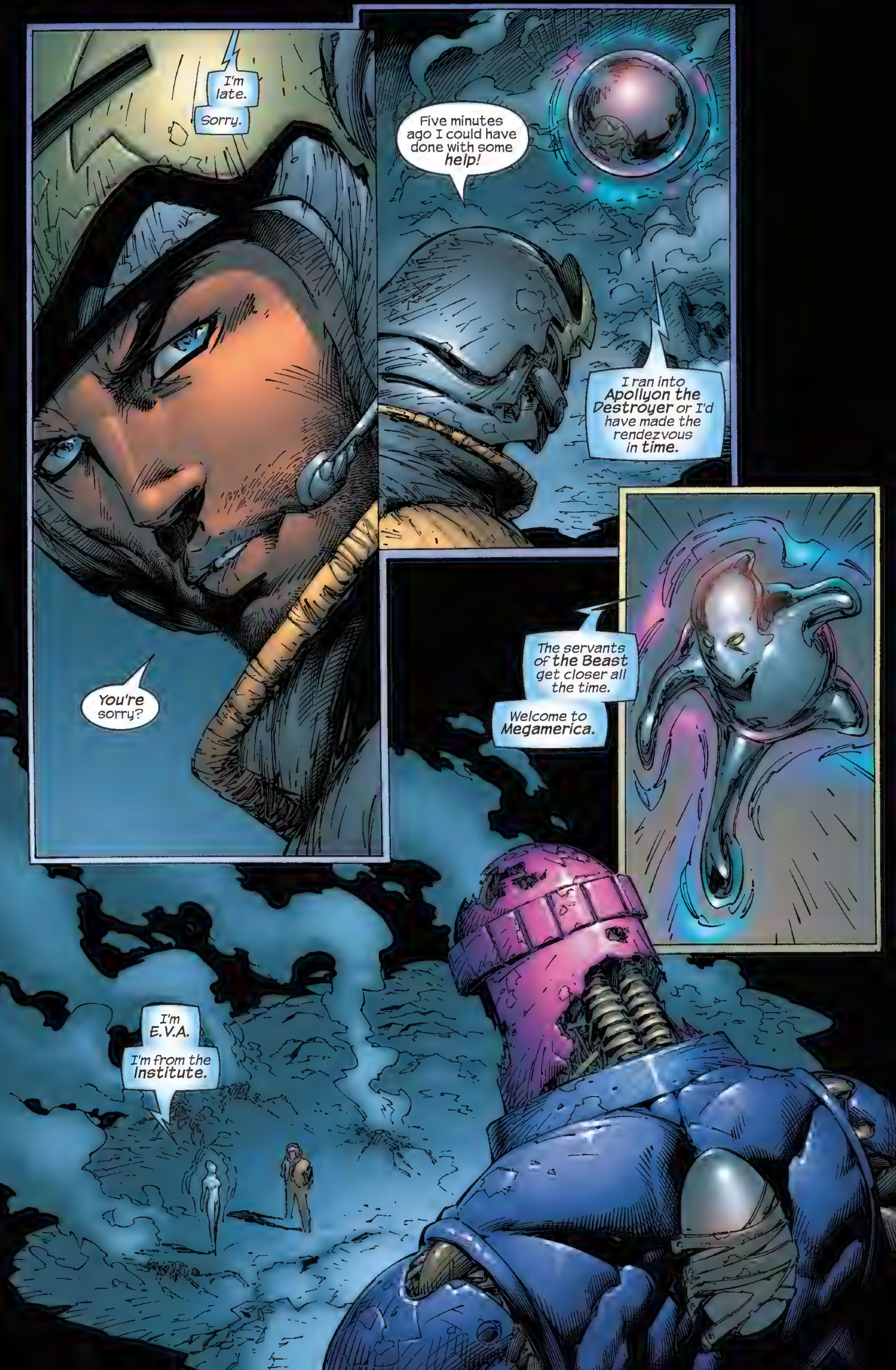
NEW X-MEN #151
"HERE COMES TOMORROW PART ONE"

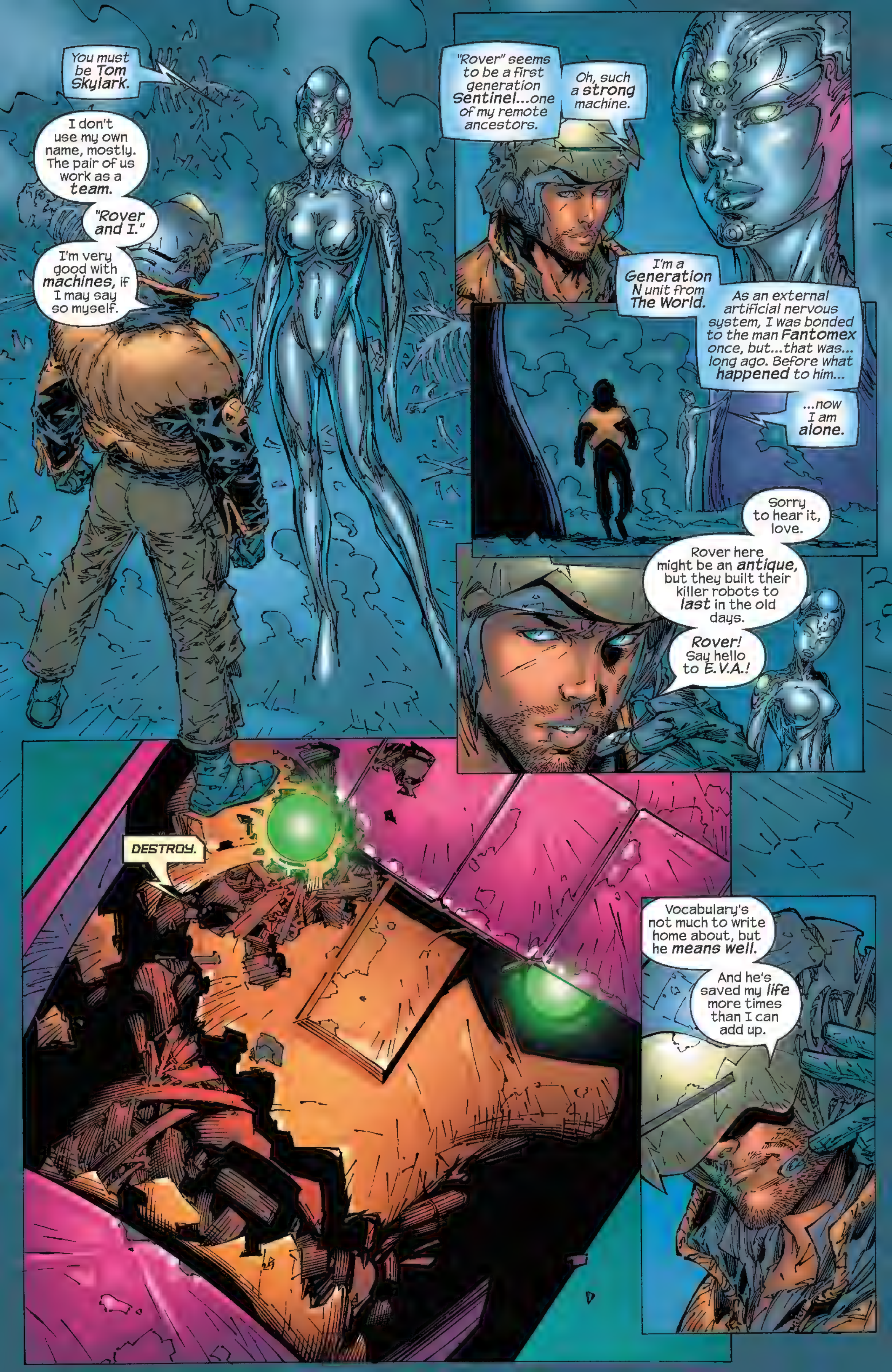

THE HERE AND NOW...
Sulphur...
...should have known.
Crawlers.
Could be ten of 'em!
Might be only one...hard to tell, with the way they jump around.
Rover, get down here!
Woo!

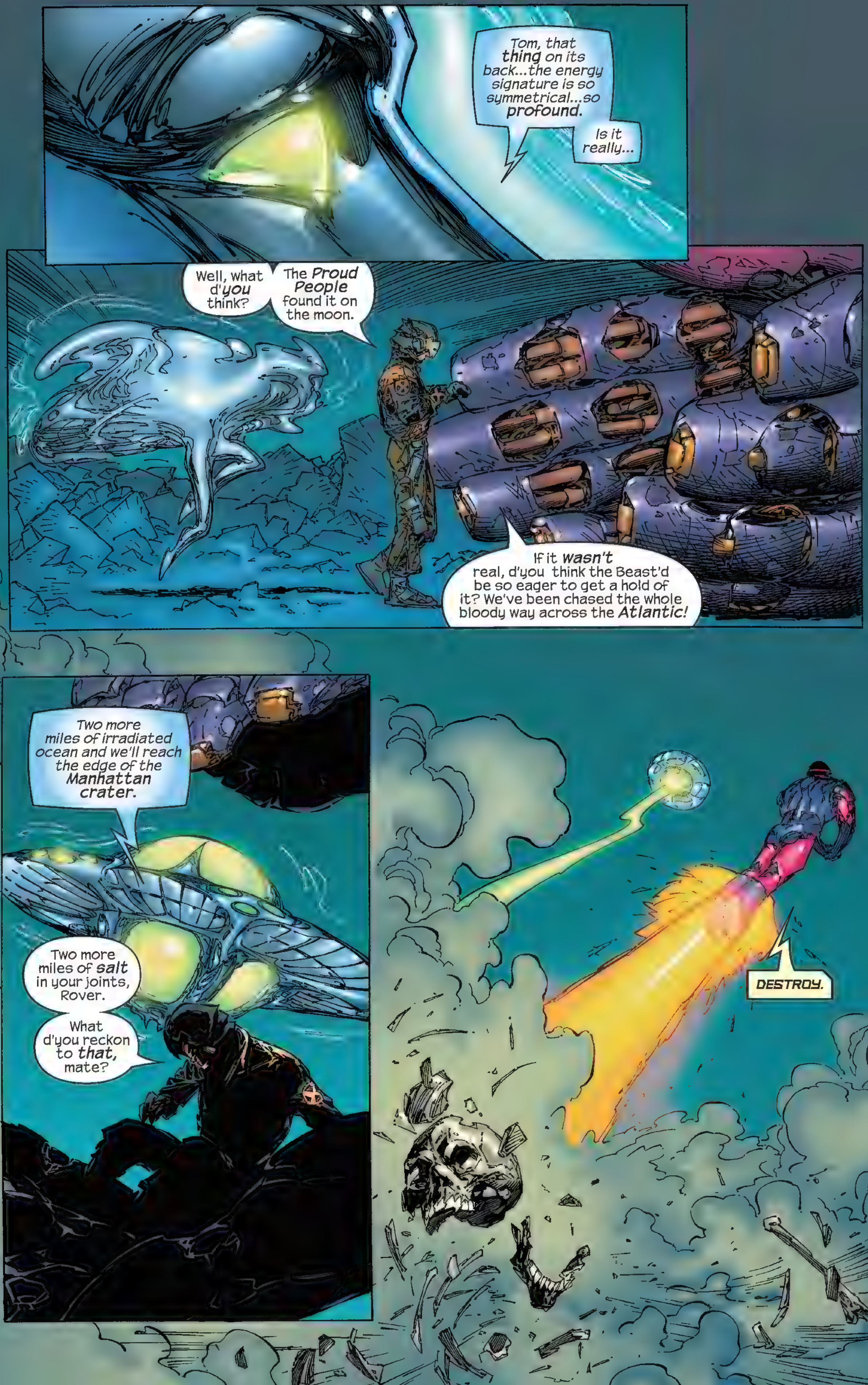

Boo!
Five.
Awright. I s'pose you're all thinking, *'Let's just pick on the poor little human out on his own...'*, aren't you?
Well, you haven't met my big *mate,* then--have you?
Rover, introduce yourself.
DESTROY.

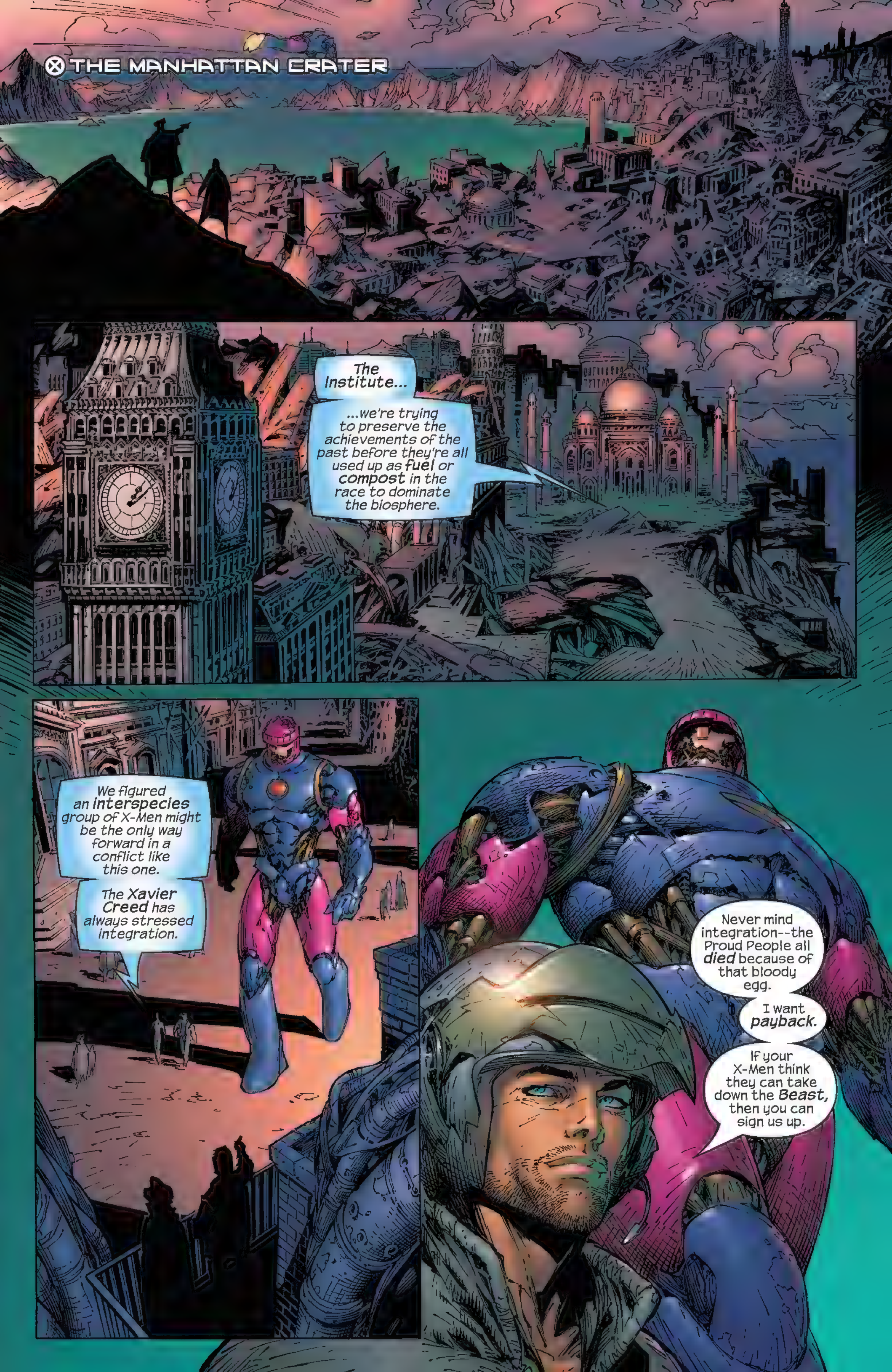

DESTROY.
DESTROY.
Well, I reckon they probably figured out who *you* are, Rover, but I didn't catch any of *their* names.
Wankers!
You know, could have sworn there was *five* of 'em.
This is bollox. We can't stay out here *one minute* longer...

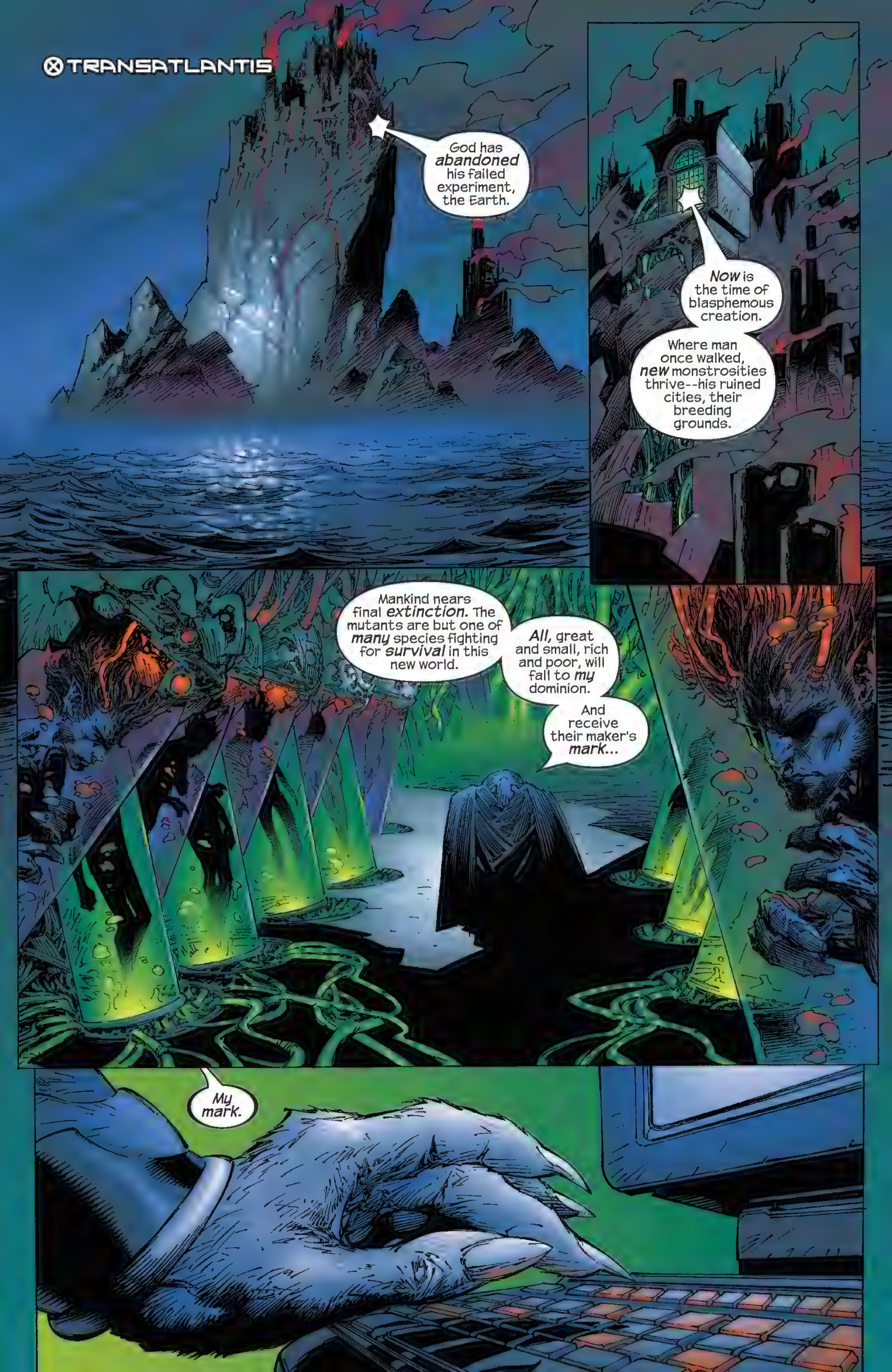

HERE COMES TOMORROW
PART 1 OF 4
GRANT MORRISON
...the Beast knows *this place* like the back of his hand.
XAVIER INSTITUTION FOR HIGHER LEARNING

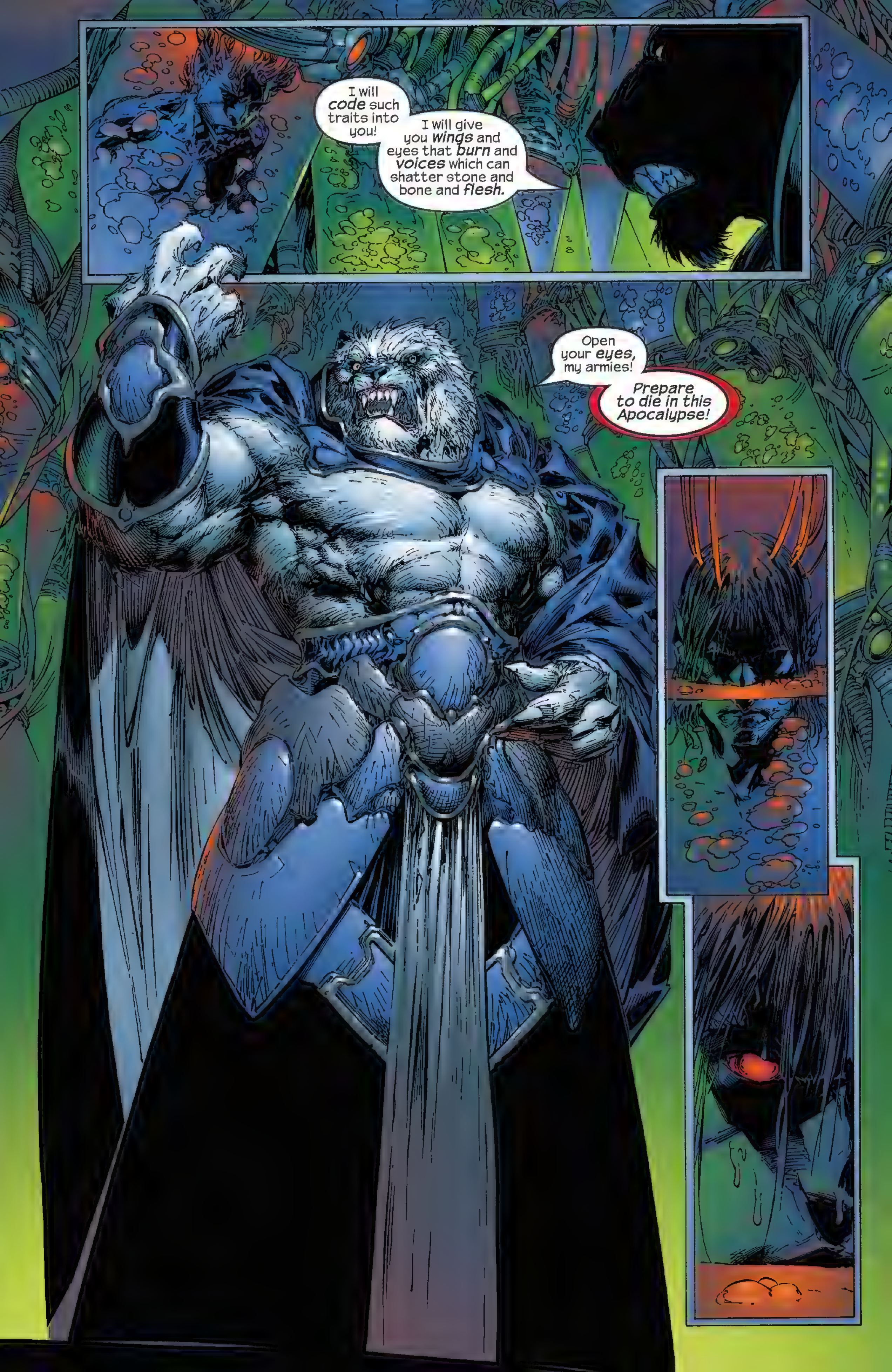

I'm late.
Sorry.
Five minutes ago I could have done with some help!
You're sorry?
I ran into Apollyon the Destroyer or I'd have made the rendezvous in time.
The servants of the Beast get closer all the time.
Welcome to Megamerica.
I'm E.V.A.
I'm from the Institute.

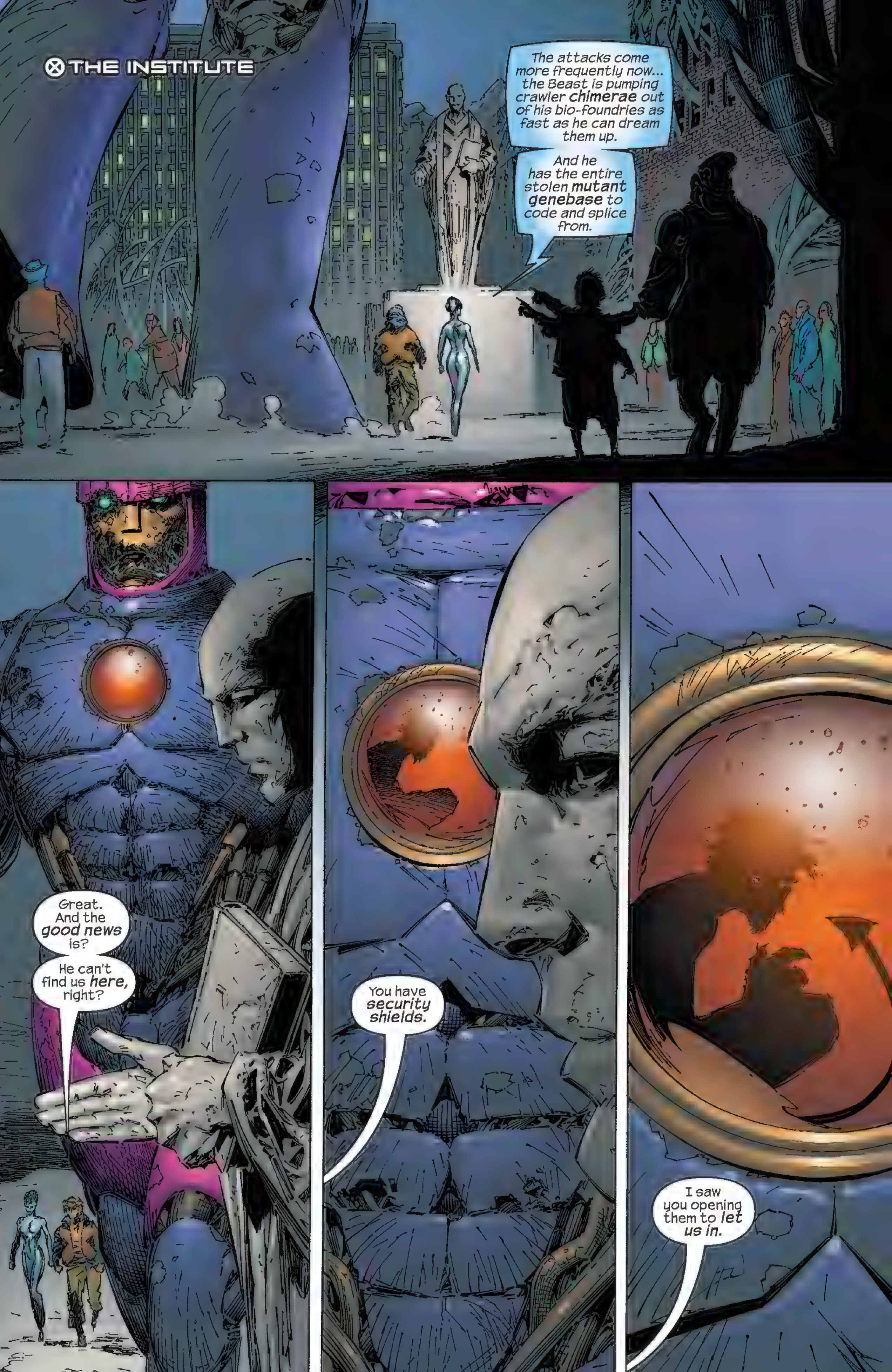

You must be Tom Skylark.
I don't use my own name, mostly. The pair of us work as a team.
"Rover and I."
I'm very good with machines, if I may say so myself.
"Rover" seems to be a first generation Sentinel...one of my remote ancestors.
Oh, such a strong machine.
I'm a Generation N unit from The World.
As an external artificial nervous system, I was bonded to the man Fantomex once, but...that was... long ago. Before what happened to him...
...now I am alone.
Sorry to hear it, love.
Rover here might be an antique, but they built their killer robots to last in the old days.
Rover! Say hello to E.V.A.!
DESTROY.
Vocabulary's not much to write home about, but he means well.
And he's saved my life more times than I can add up.

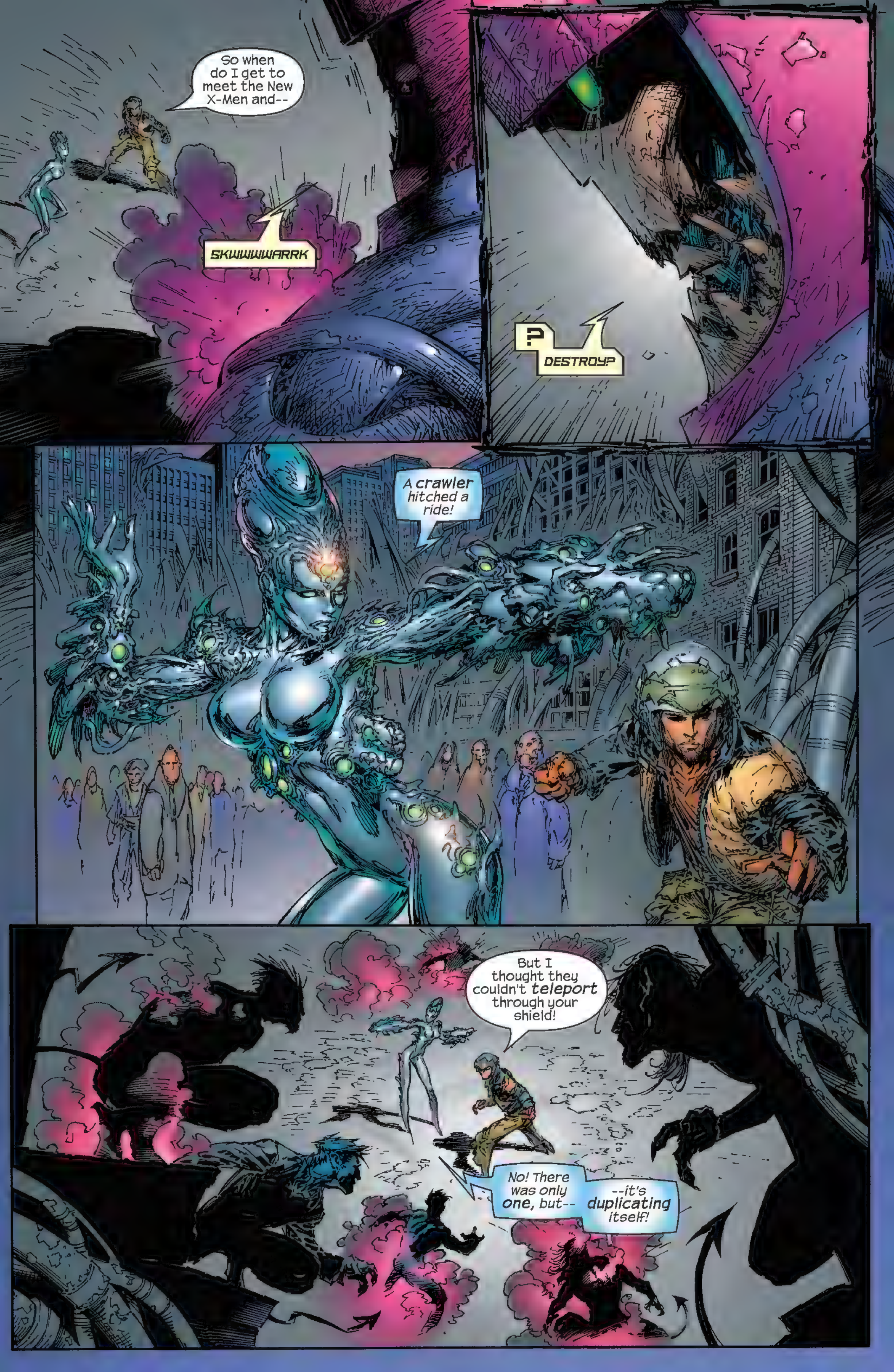

Tom, that thing on its back...the energy signature is so symmetrical...so profound.
Is it really...
Well, what d'you think?
The Proud People found it on the moon.
If it wasn't real, d'you think the Beast'd be so eager to get a hold of it? We've been chased the whole bloody way across the Atlantic!
Two more miles of irradiated ocean and we'll reach the edge of the Manhattan crater.
Two more miles of salt in your joints, Rover.
What d'you reckon to that, mate?
DESTROY.

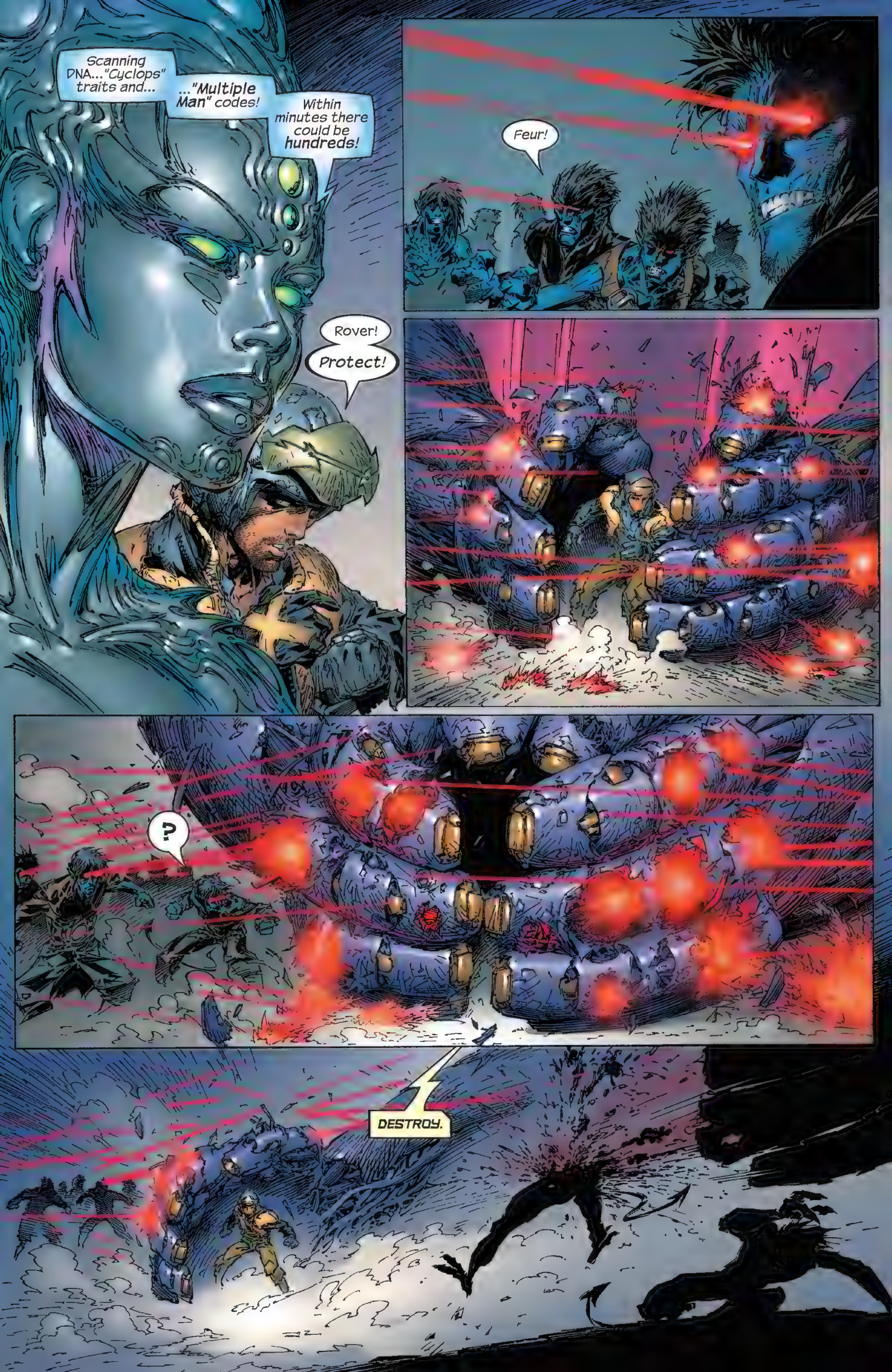

THE MANHATTAN CRATER
The Institute...
...we're trying to preserve the achievements of the past before they're all used up as **fuel** or **compost** in the race to dominate the biosphere.
We figured an **interspecies** group of X-Men might be the only way forward in a conflict like this one.
The **Xavier Creed** has always stressed integration.
Never mind integration--the Proud People all **died** because of that bloody egg.
I want **payback.**
If your X-Men think they can take down the **Beast,** then you can sign us up.

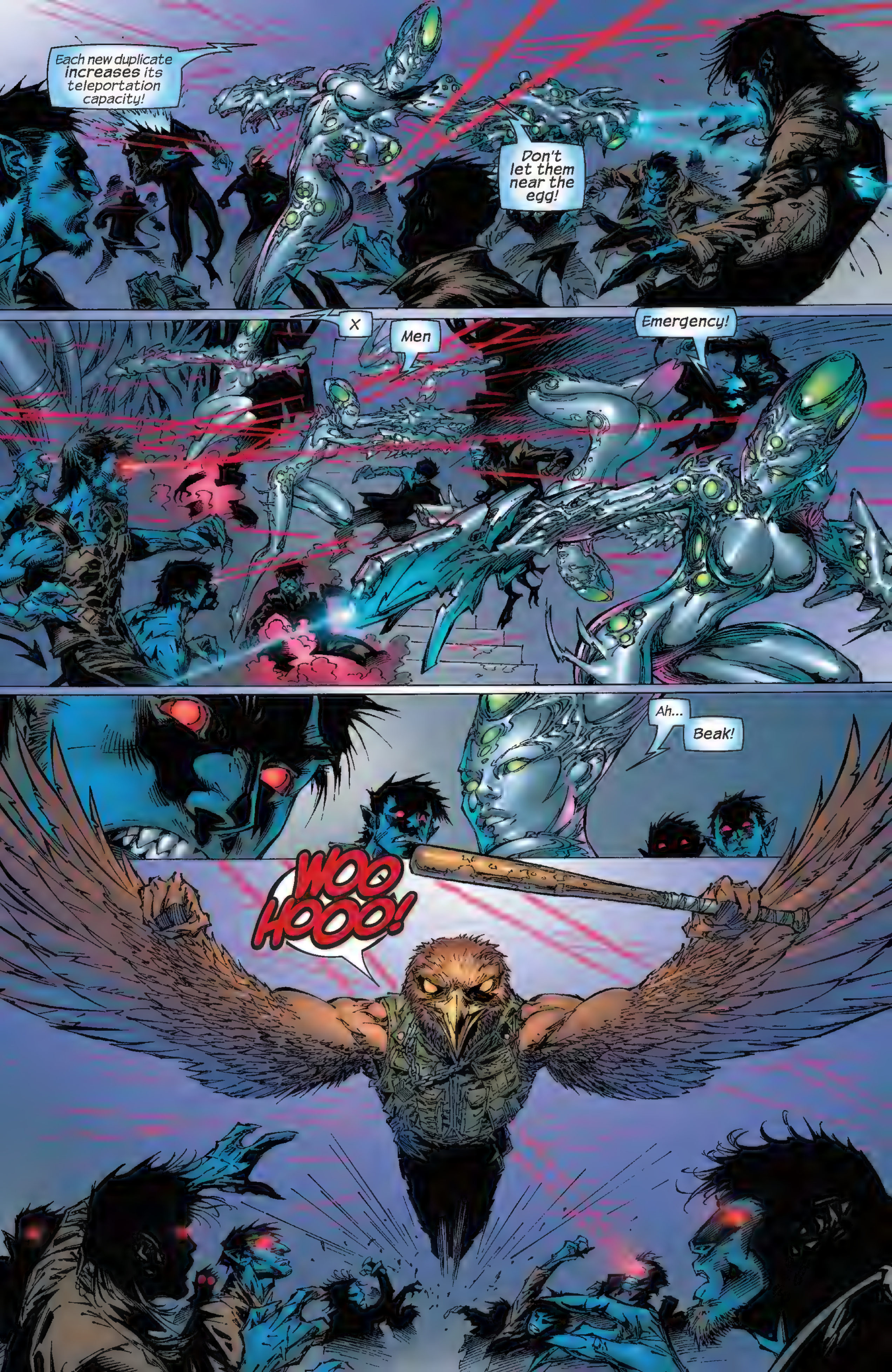

TRANSATLANTIS
God has *abandoned* his failed experiment, the Earth.
Now is the time of blasphemous creation.
Where man once walked, *new* monstrosities thrive--his ruined cities, their breeding grounds.
Mankind nears final *extinction*. The mutants are but one of *many* species fighting for *survival* in this new world.
All, great and small, rich and poor, will fall to *my* dominion.
And receive their maker's *mark*...
My mark.

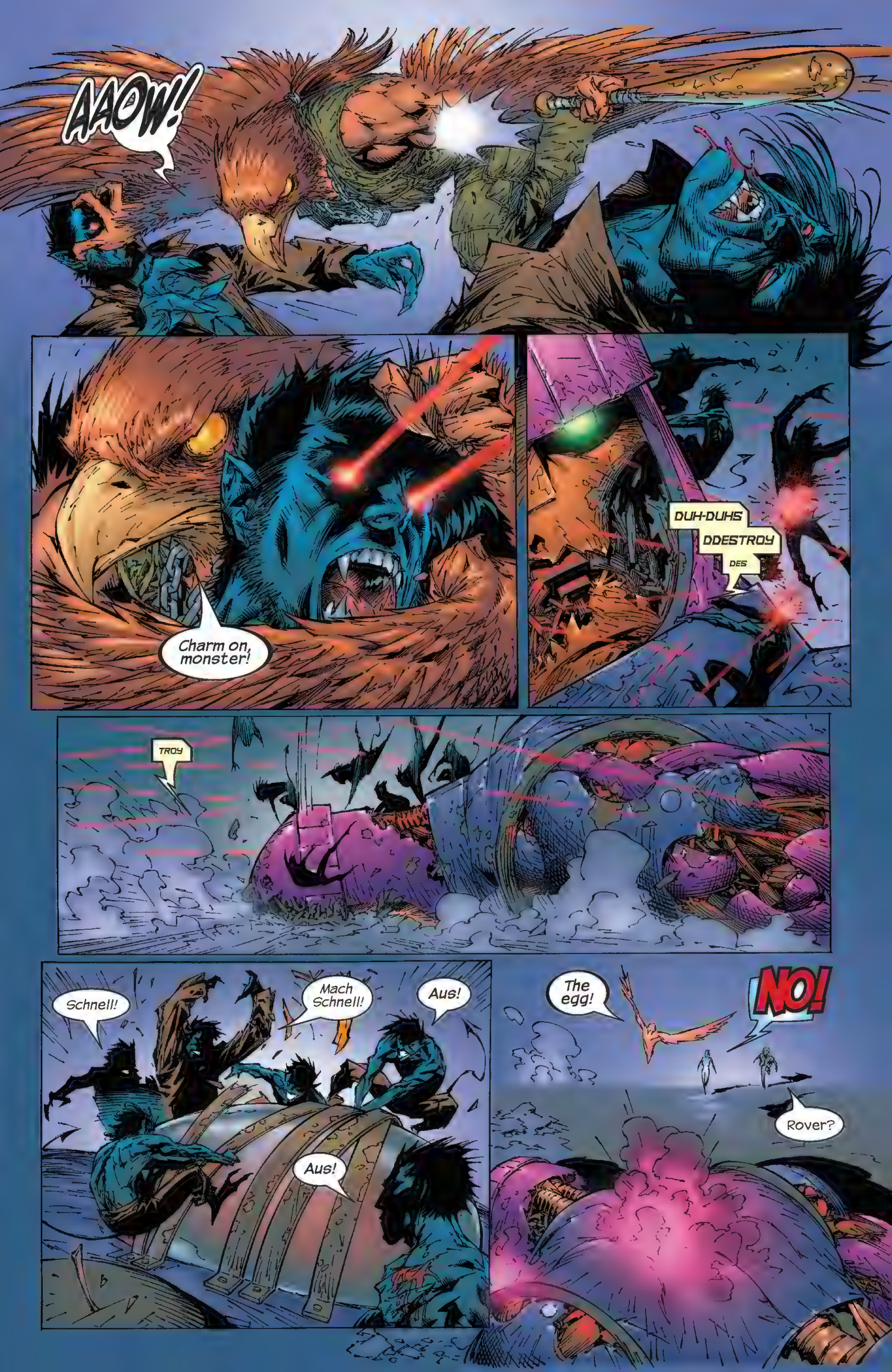

I will *code* such traits into you!
I will give you *wings* and eyes that *burn* and *voices* which can shatter stone and bone and *flesh.*
Open your *eyes,* my armies!
Prepare to die in this Apocalypse!

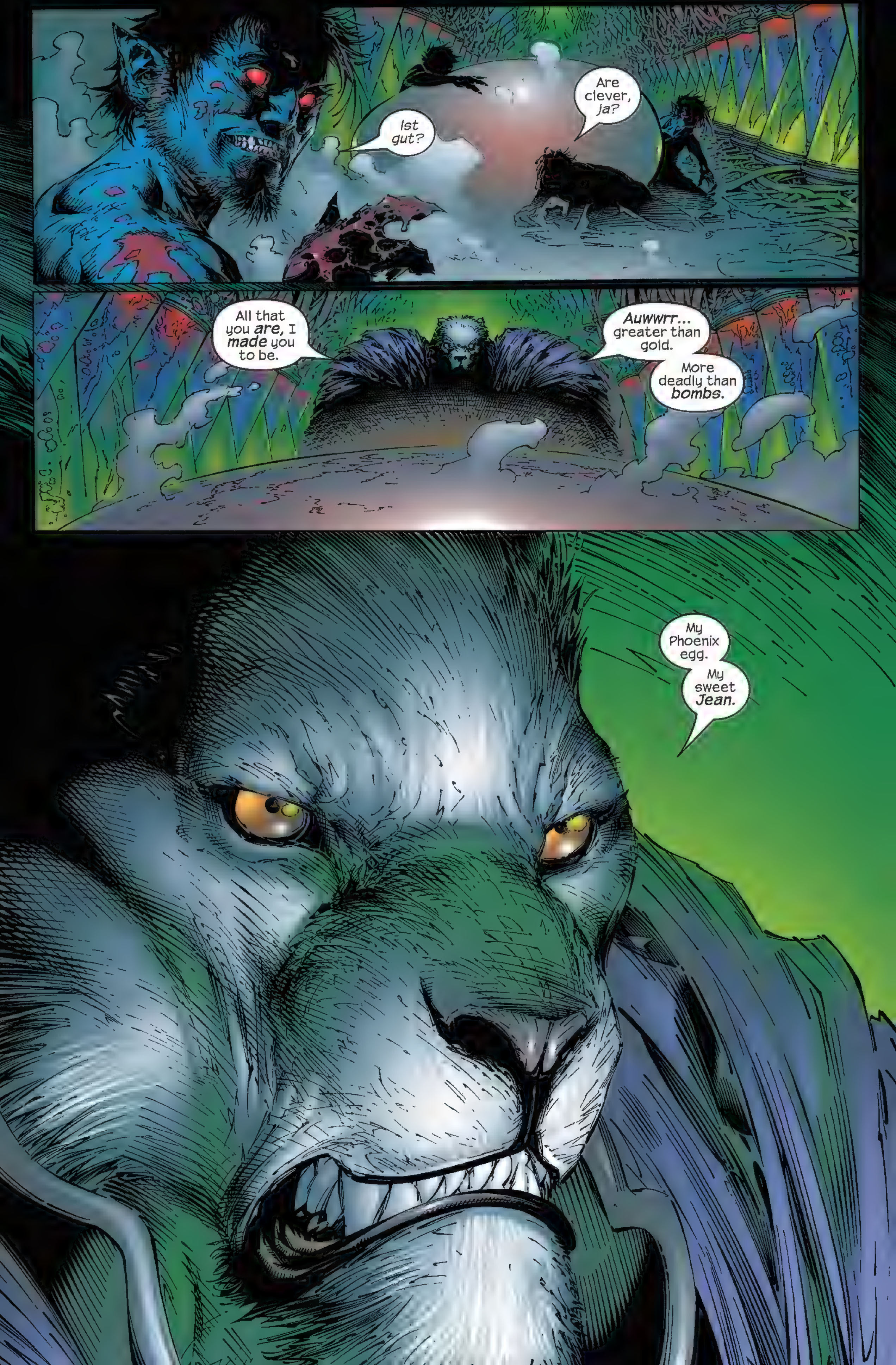

THE INSTITUTE
The attacks come more frequently now... the Beast is pumping crawler **chimerae** out of his bio-foundries as fast as he can dream them up.
And he has the entire stolen **mutant genebase** to code and splice from.
Great. And the *good news* is?
He can't find us *here,* right?
You have *security shields.*
I saw you opening them to *let us in.*

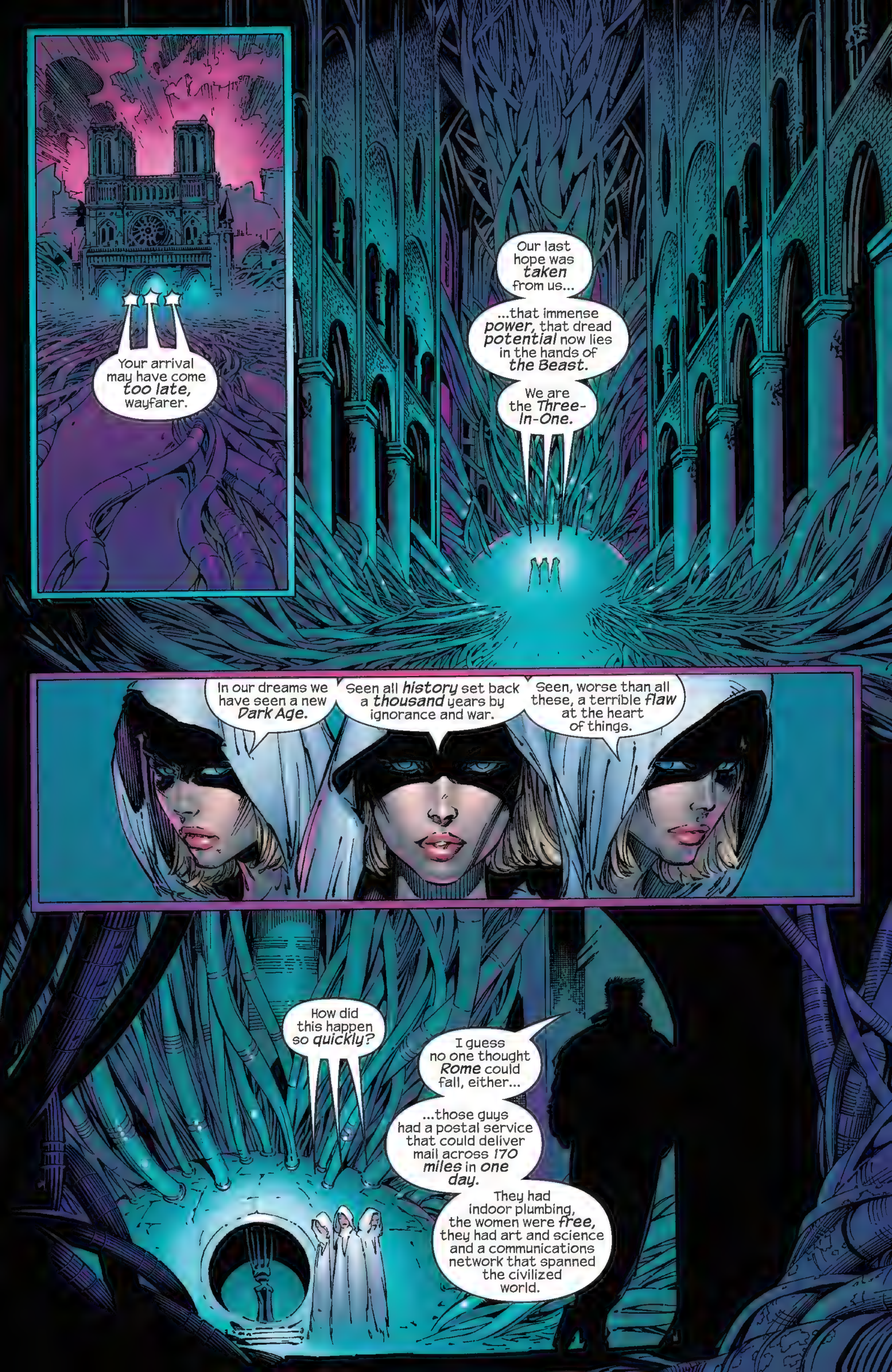

So when do I get to meet the New X-Men and--
SKWWWWARRK
? DESTROY?
A crawler hitched a ride!
But I thought they couldn't teleport through your shield!
No! There was only one, but--
--it's duplicating itself!

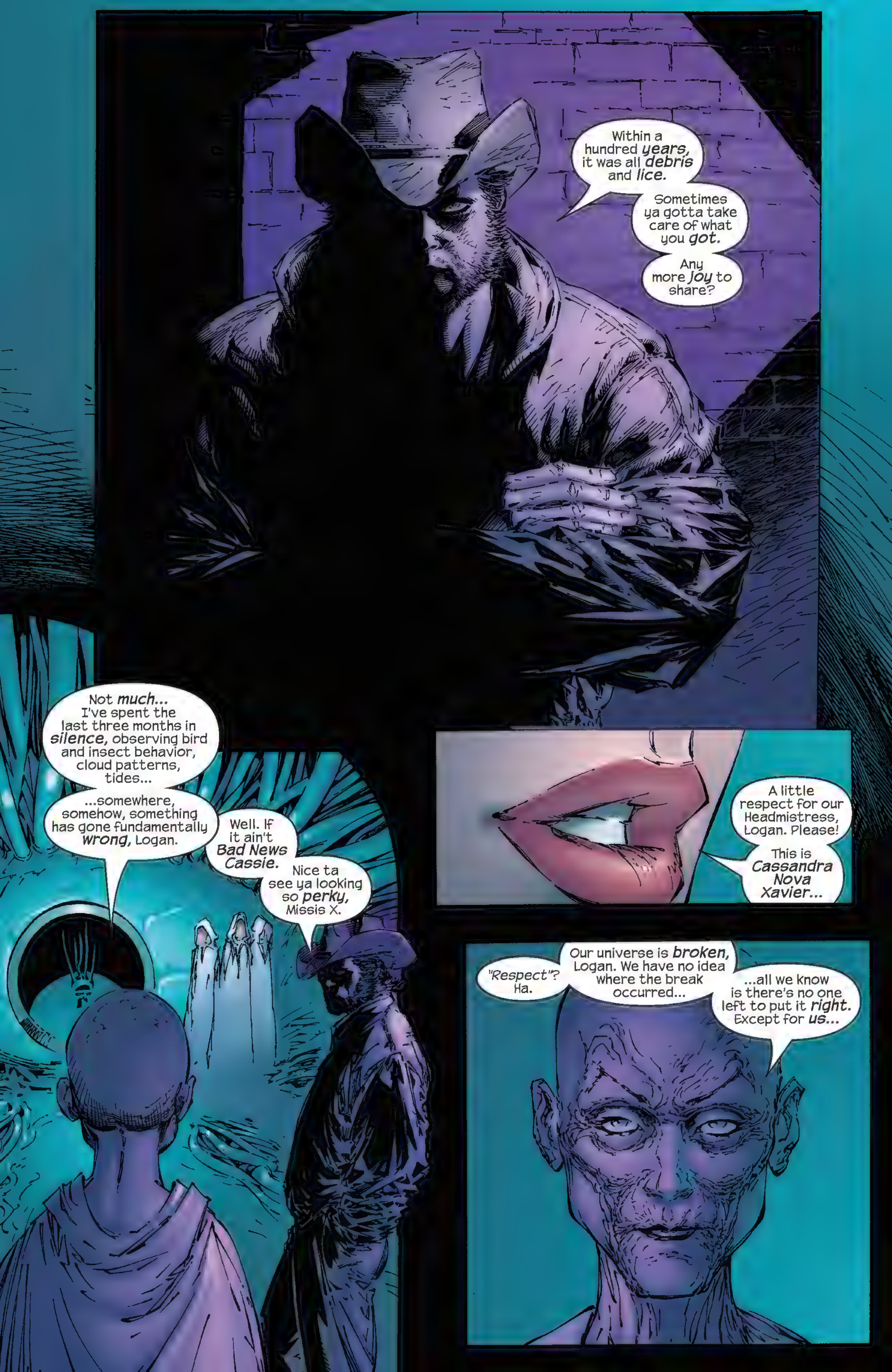

Scanning DNA..."Cyclops" traits and...
..."Multiple Man" codes!
Within minutes there could be hundreds!
Feur!
Rover!
Protect!
?
DESTROY.

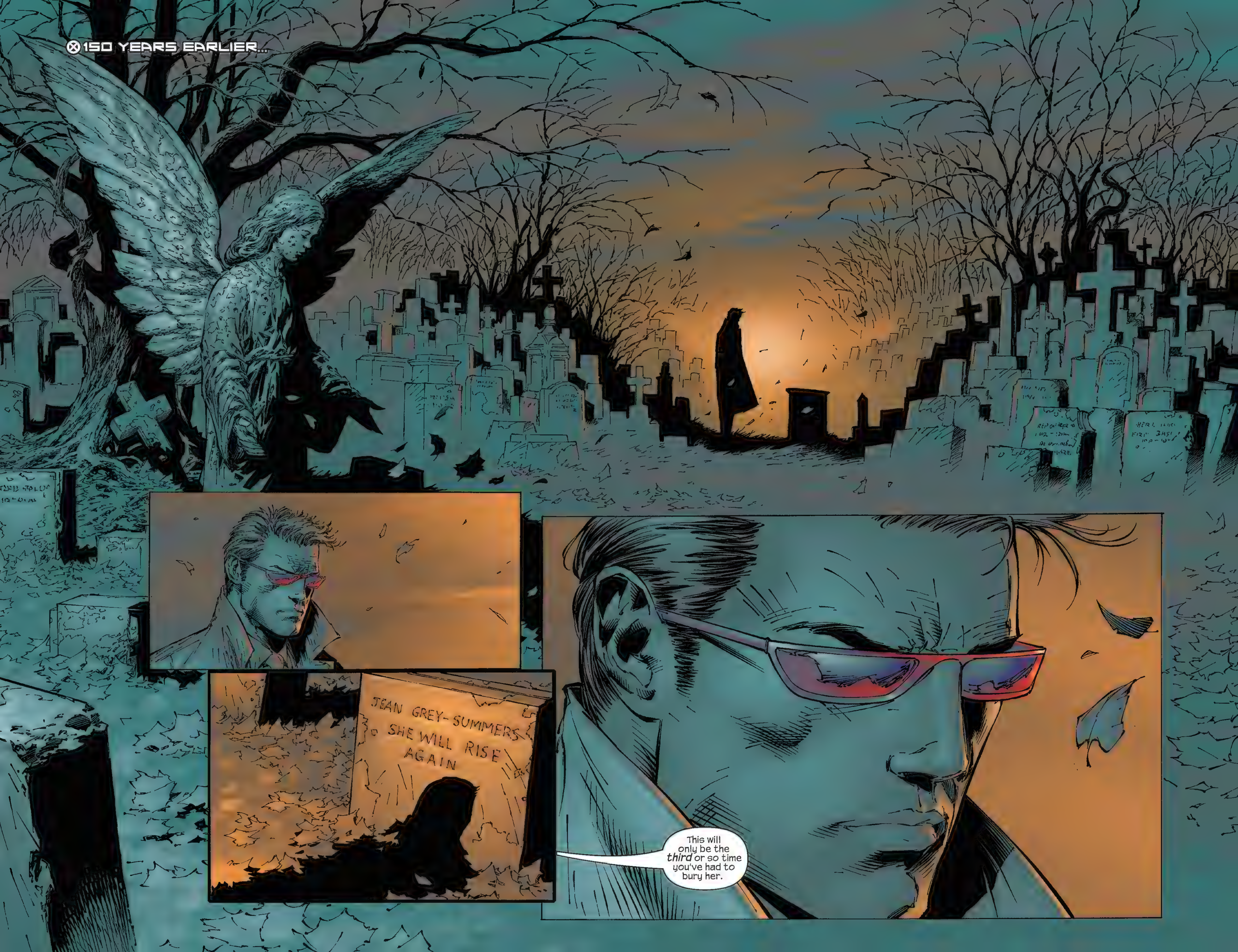

Each new duplicate **increases** its teleportation capacity!
Don't let them near the egg!
X
Men
Emergency!
Ah...
Beak!
WOO HOOO!

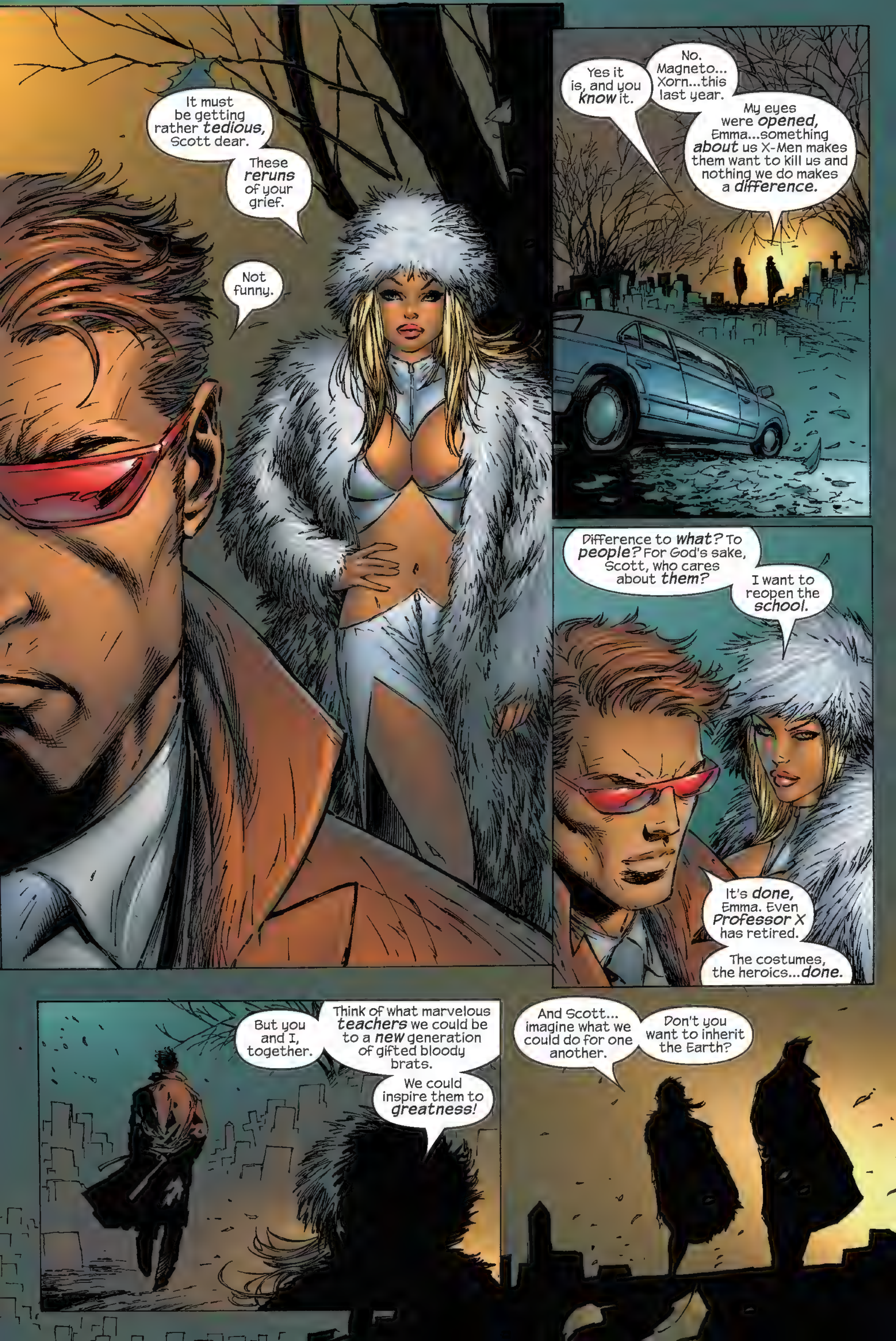

AAOW!
Charm on, monster!
DUH-DUHS
DDESTROY
DES
TROY
Schnell!
Mach Schnell!
Aus!
Aus!
The egg!
NO!
Rover?

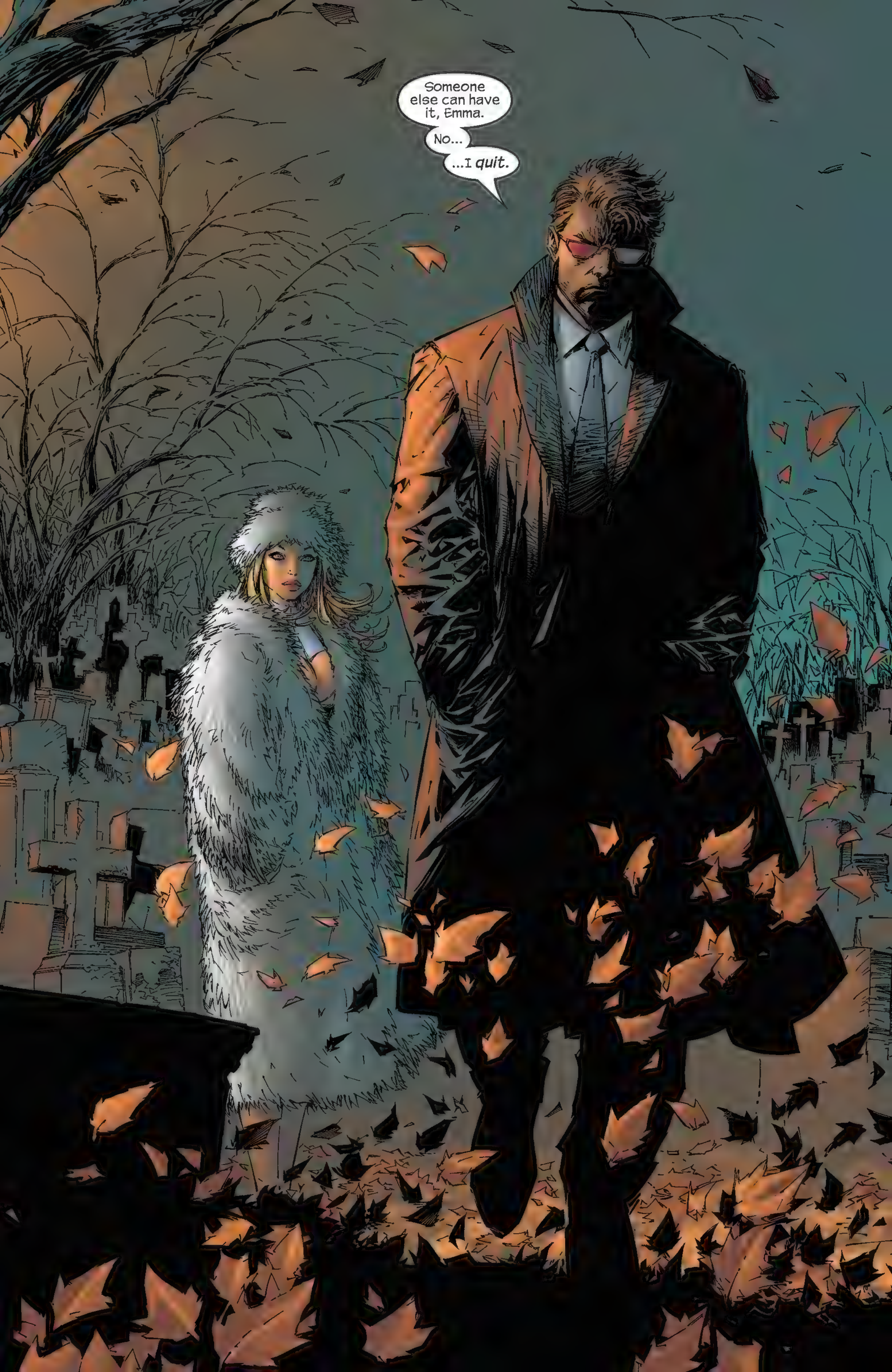

Ist gut?
Are clever, ja?
All that you *are,* I *made* you to be.
Auwwrr... greater than gold.
More deadly than *bombs.*
My Phoenix egg.
My sweet *Jean.*

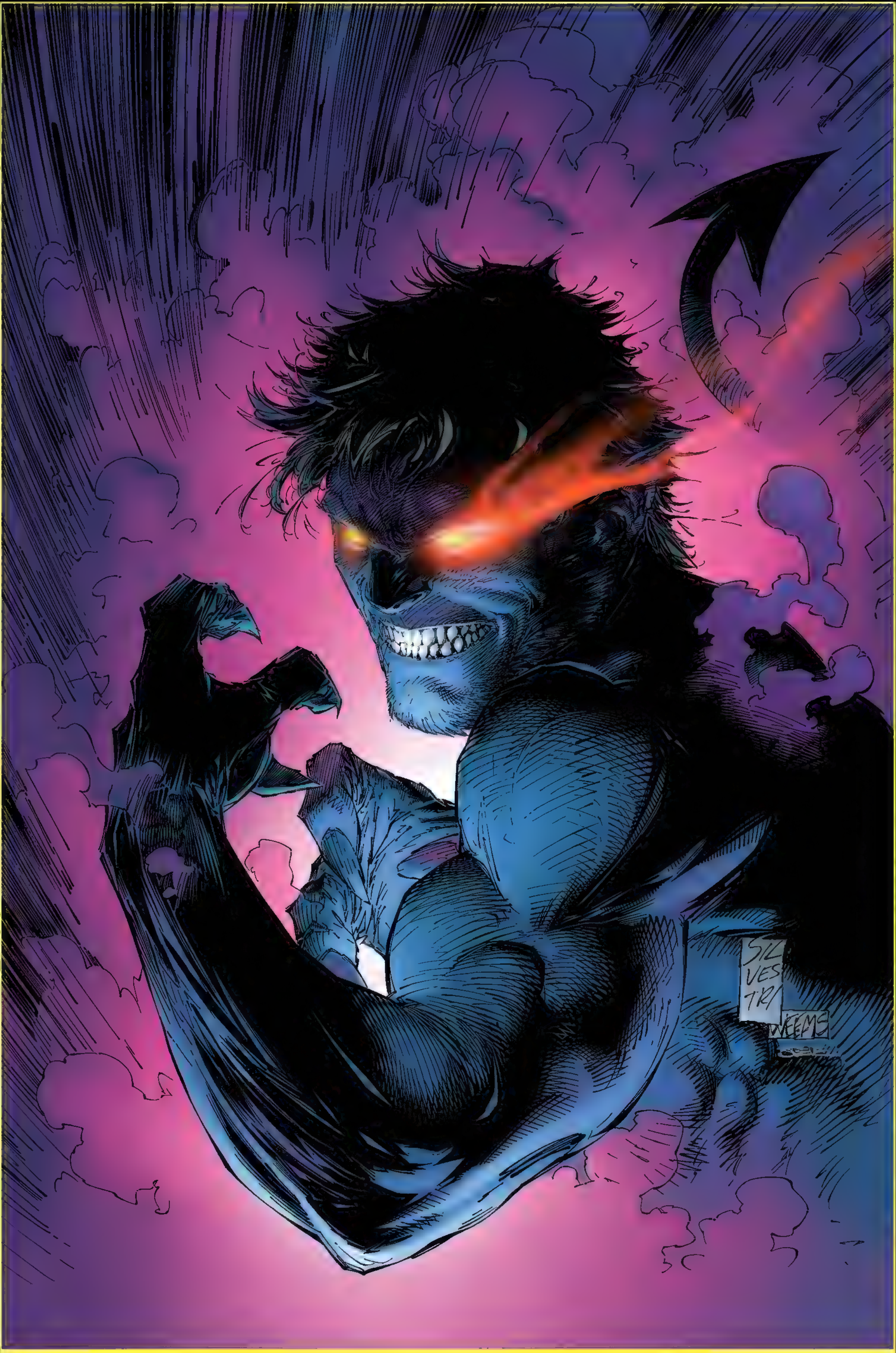

Your arrival may have come *too late,* wayfarer.
Our last hope was *taken* from us...
...that immense *power,* that dread *potential* now lies in the hands of *the Beast.*
We are the *Three-In-One.*
In our dreams we have seen a new *Dark Age.*
Seen all *history* set back a *thousand* years by ignorance and war.
Seen, worse than all these, a terrible *flaw* at the heart of things.
How did this happen so *quickly?*
I guess no one thought *Rome* could fall, either...
...those guys had a postal service that could deliver mail across *170 miles* in *one day.*
They had indoor plumbing, the women were *free,* they had art and science and a communications network that spanned the civilized world.


Within a hundred *years,* it was all *debris* and *lice.*
Sometimes ya gotta take care of what you *got.*
Any more *joy* to share?
Not *much...* I've spent the last three months in *silence,* observing bird and insect behavior, cloud patterns, tides...
...somewhere, somehow, something has gone fundamentally *wrong,* Logan.
Well. If it ain't *Bad News Cassie.*
Nice ta see ya looking so *perky,* Missis X.
A little respect for our Headmistress, Logan. Please!
This is *Cassandra Nova Xavier...*
"Respect"? Ha.
Our universe is *broken,* Logan. We have no idea where the break occurred...
...all we know is there's no one left to put it *right.* Except for *us...*


150 YEARS EARLIER...
JEAN GREY-SUMMERS
SHE WILL RISE AGAIN
This will only be the *third* or so time you've had to bury her.


It must be getting rather *tedious,* Scott dear.
These *reruns* of your grief.
Not funny.
Yes it is, and you *know* it.
No. Magneto... Xorn...this last year.
My eyes were *opened,* Emma...something *about* us X-Men makes them want to kill us and nothing we do makes a *difference.*
Difference to *what?* To *people?* For God's sake, Scott, who cares about *them?*
I want to reopen the *school.*
It's *done,* Emma. Even *Professor X* has retired.
The costumes, the heroics...*done.*
But you and I, together.
Think of what marvelous *teachers* we could be to a *new* generation of gifted bloody brats.
We could inspire them to *greatness!*
And Scott... imagine what we could do for one another.
Don't you want to inherit the Earth?


Someone else can have it, Emma.
No...
...I quit.


SILVESTRI
WEEMS

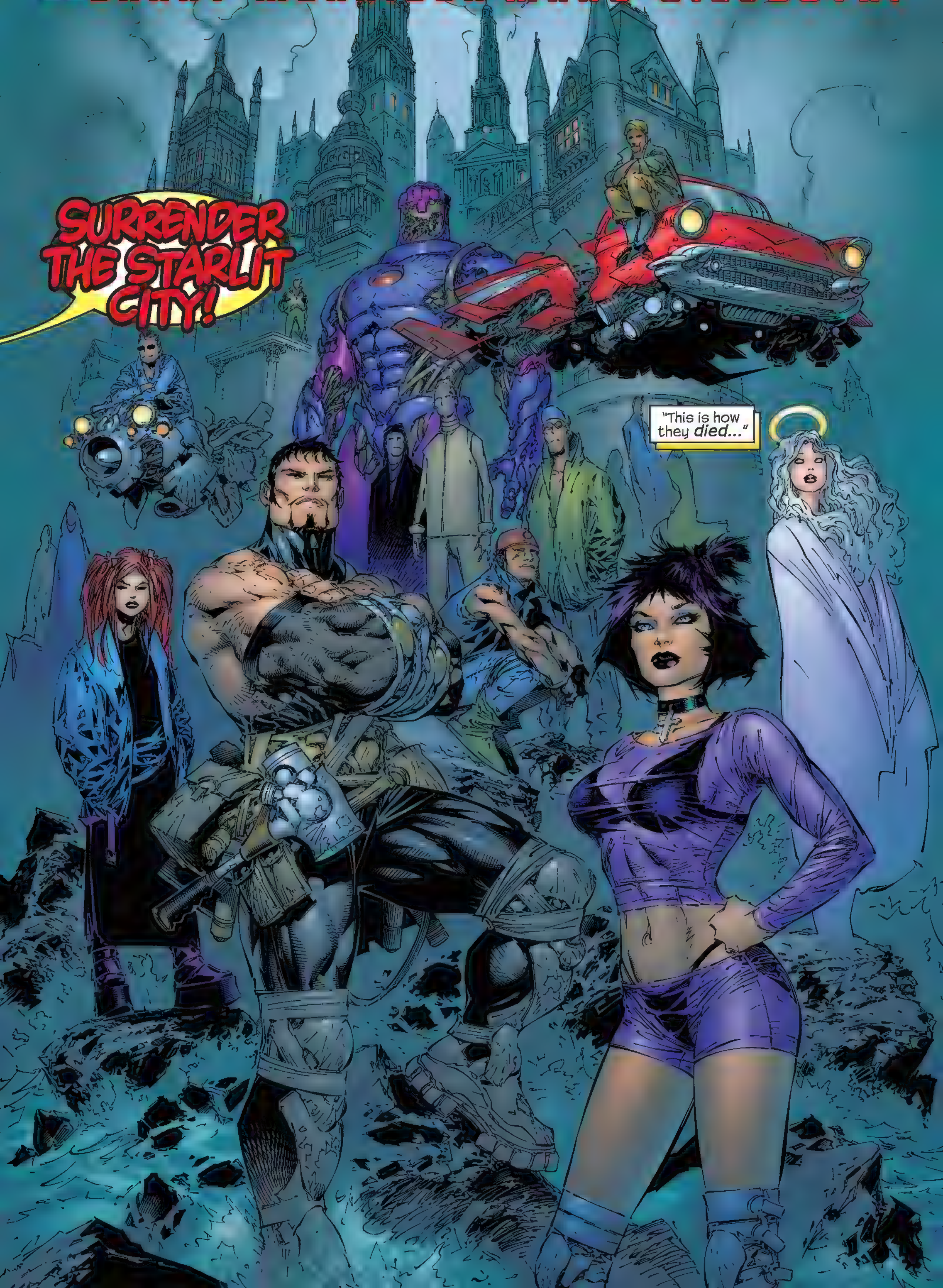
NEW X-MEN #152

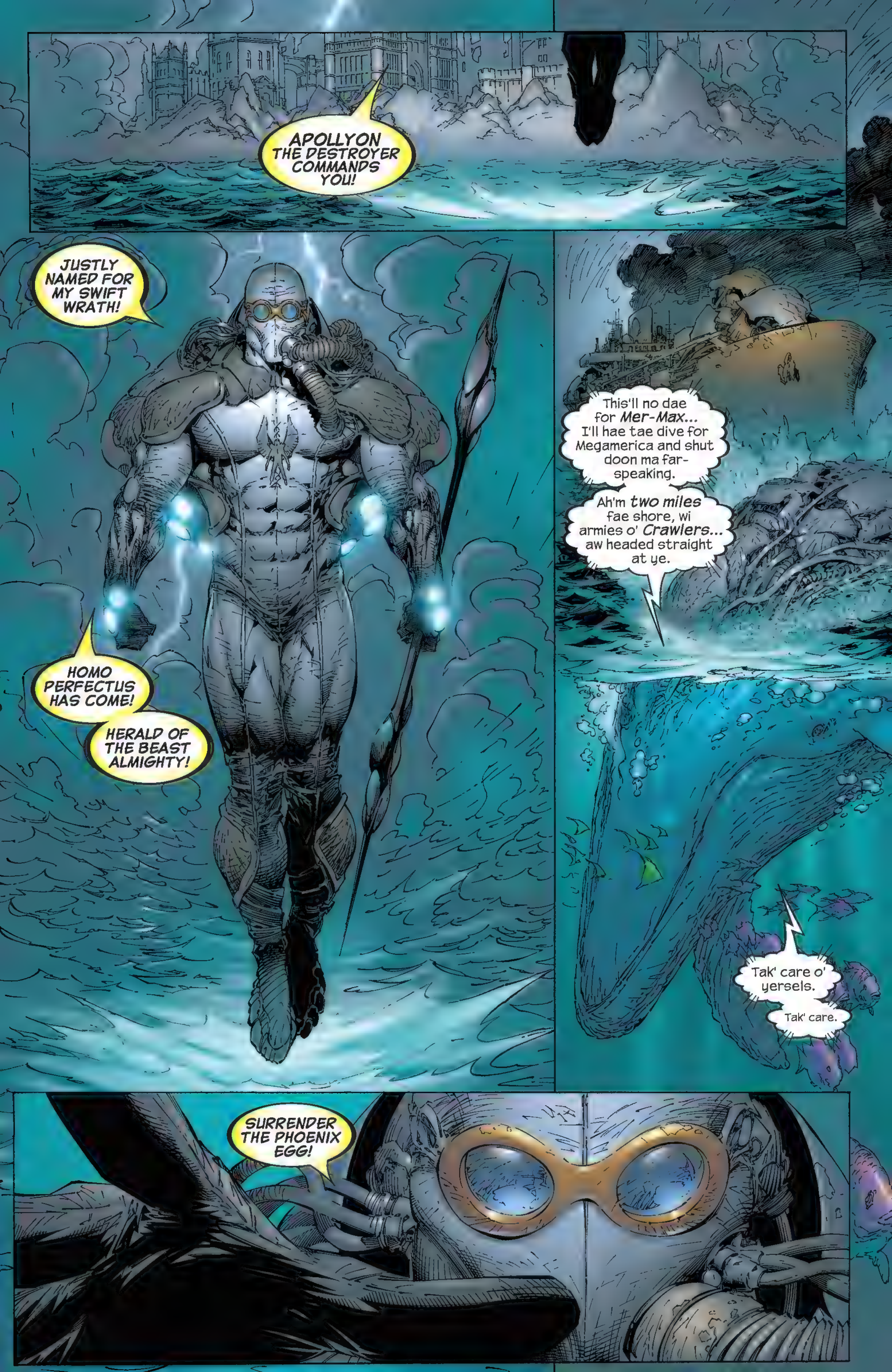
"HERE COMES TOMORROW PART TWO"

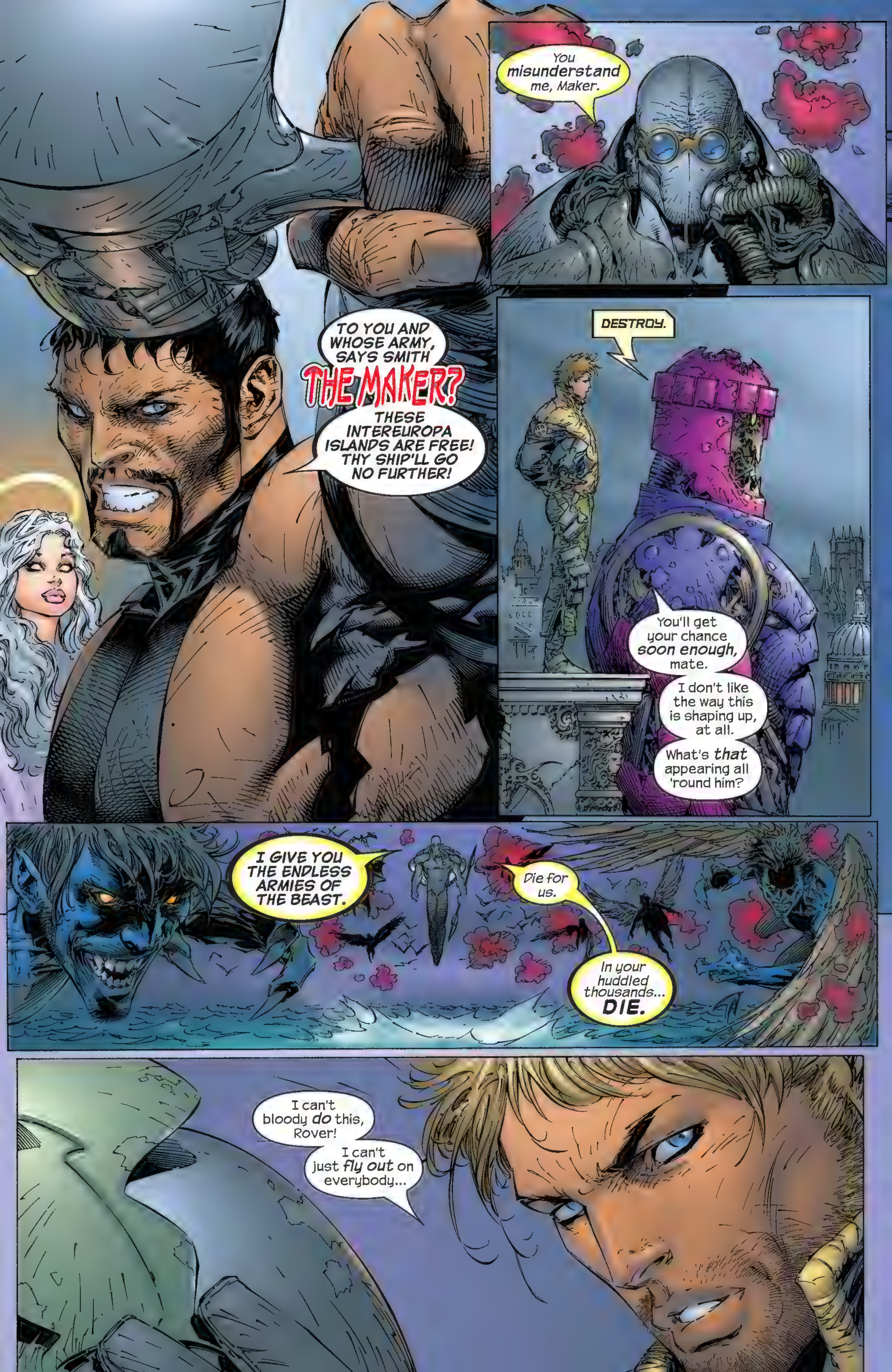
HERE COMES TOMORROW

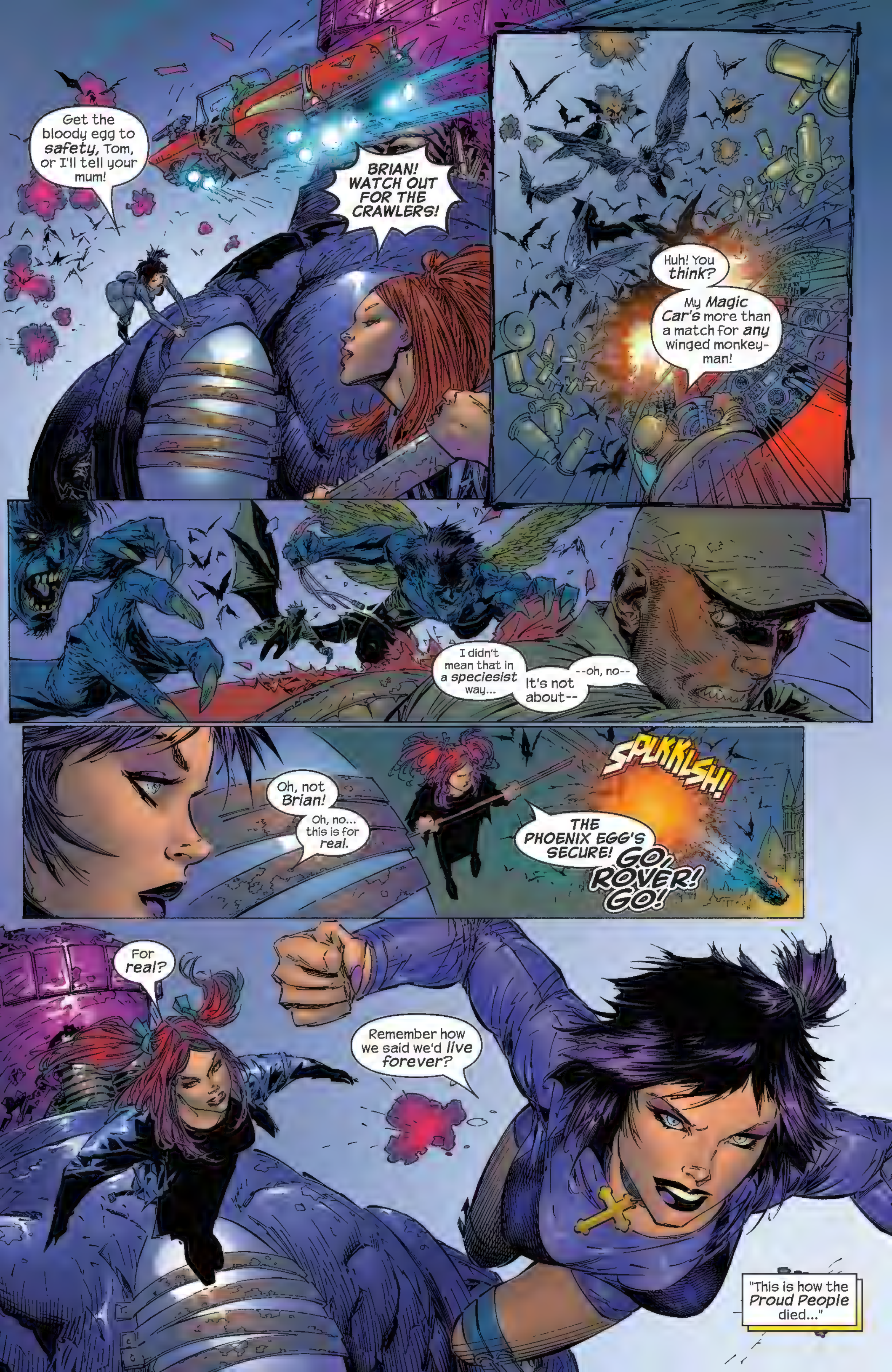
PART 2 OF 4

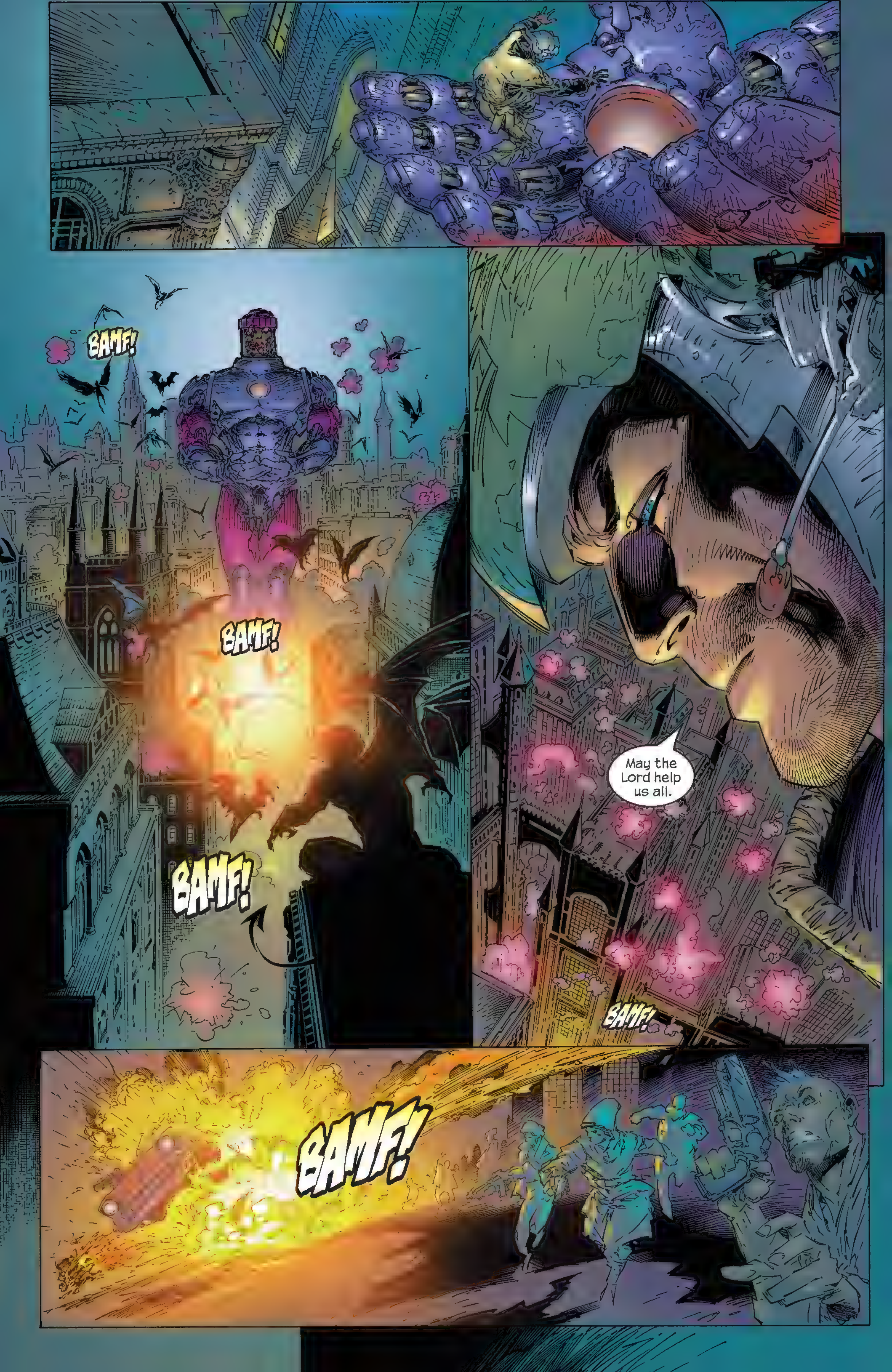
GRANT MORRISON MARC SILVESTRI

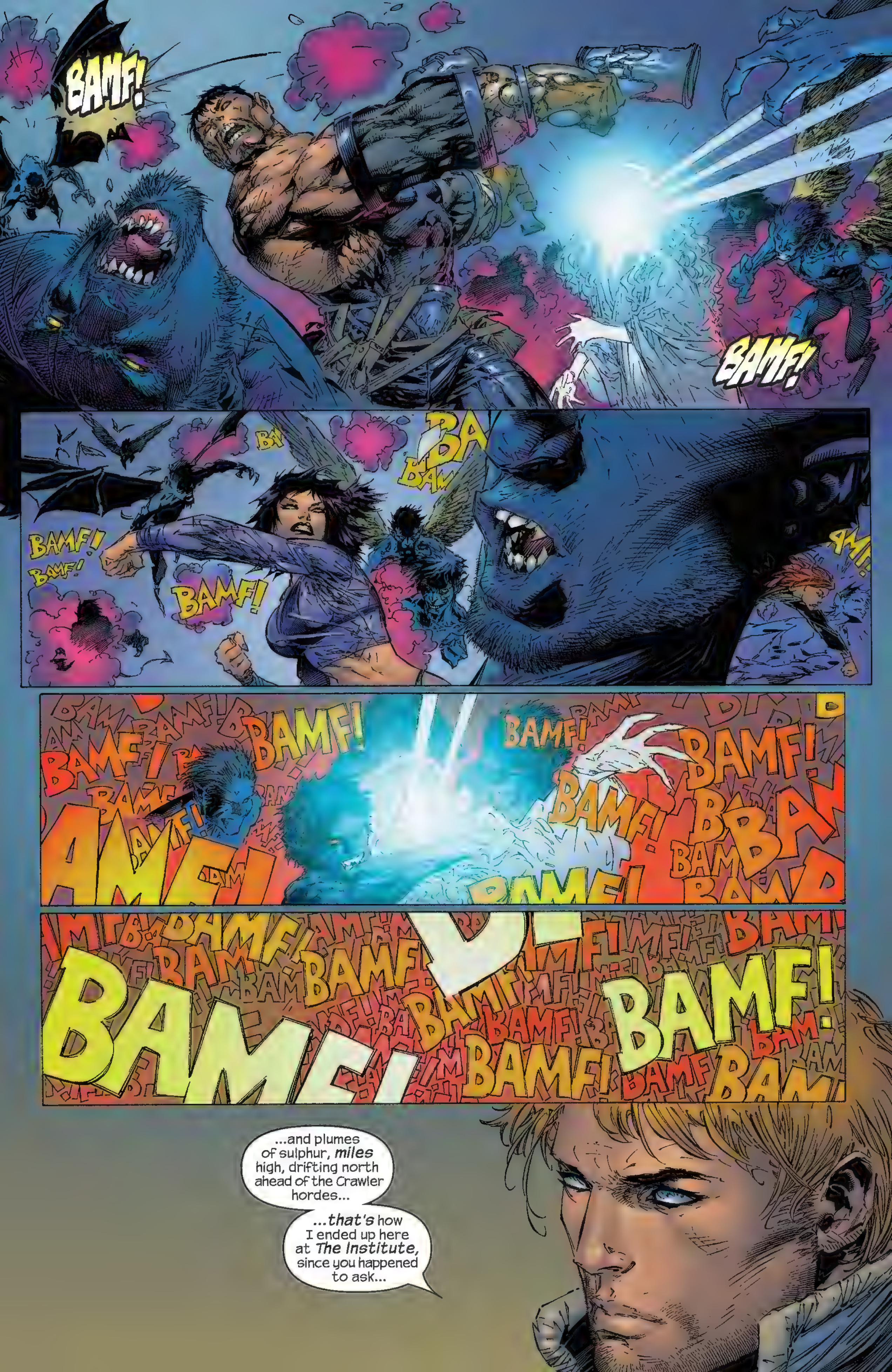

SURRENDER THE STARLIT CITY!
"This is how they *died*..."

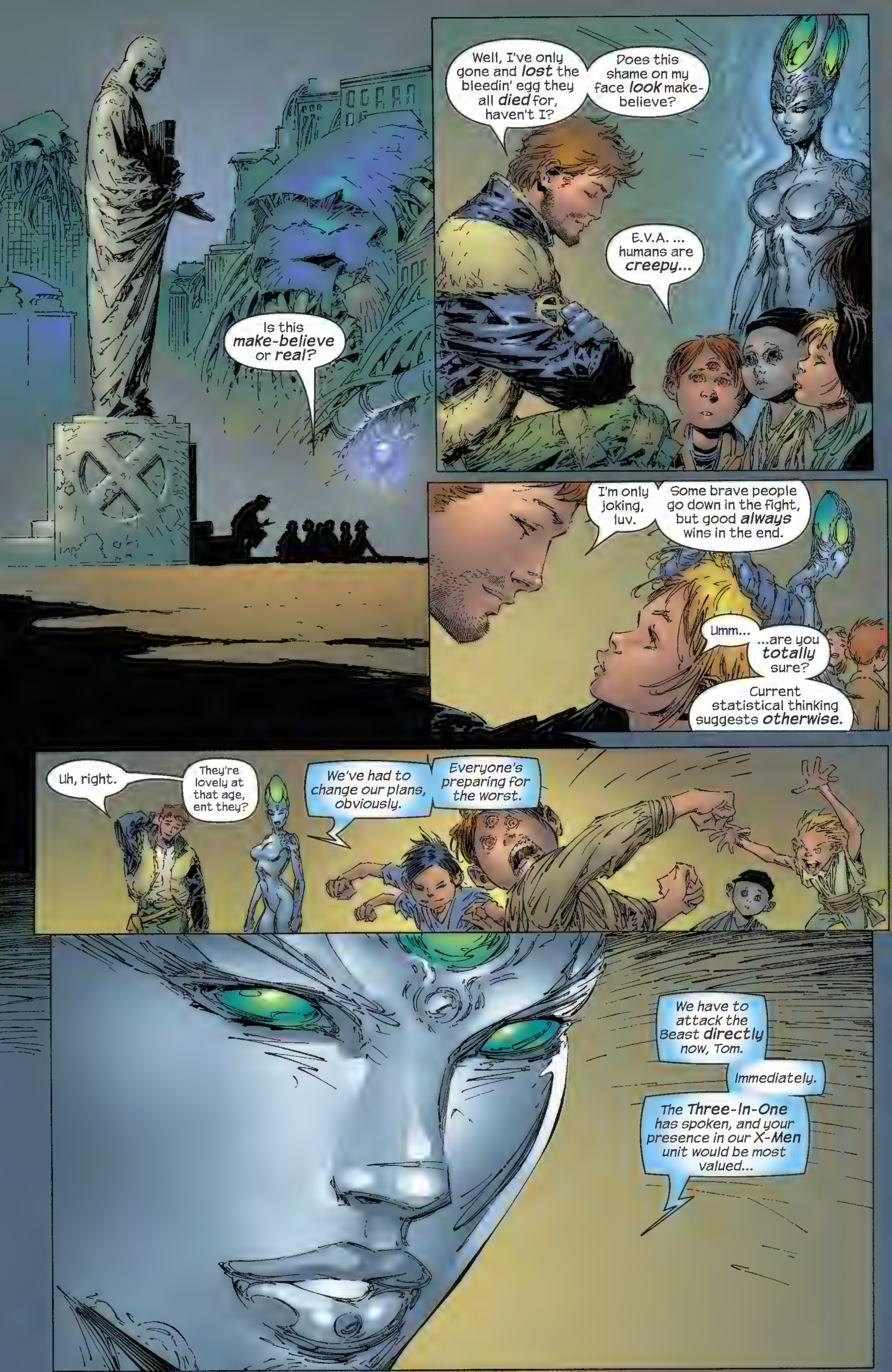

APOLLYON THE DESTROYER COMMANDS YOU!
JUSTLY NAMED FOR MY SWIFT WRATH!
HOMO PERFECTUS HAS COME!
HERALD OF THE BEAST ALMIGHTY!
This'll no dae for *Mer-Max*... I'll hae tae dive for Megamerica and shut doon ma far-speaking.
Ah'm *two miles* fae shore, wi armies o' *Crawlers*... aw headed straight at ye.
Tak' care o' yersels.
Tak' care.
SURRENDER THE PHOENIX EGG!

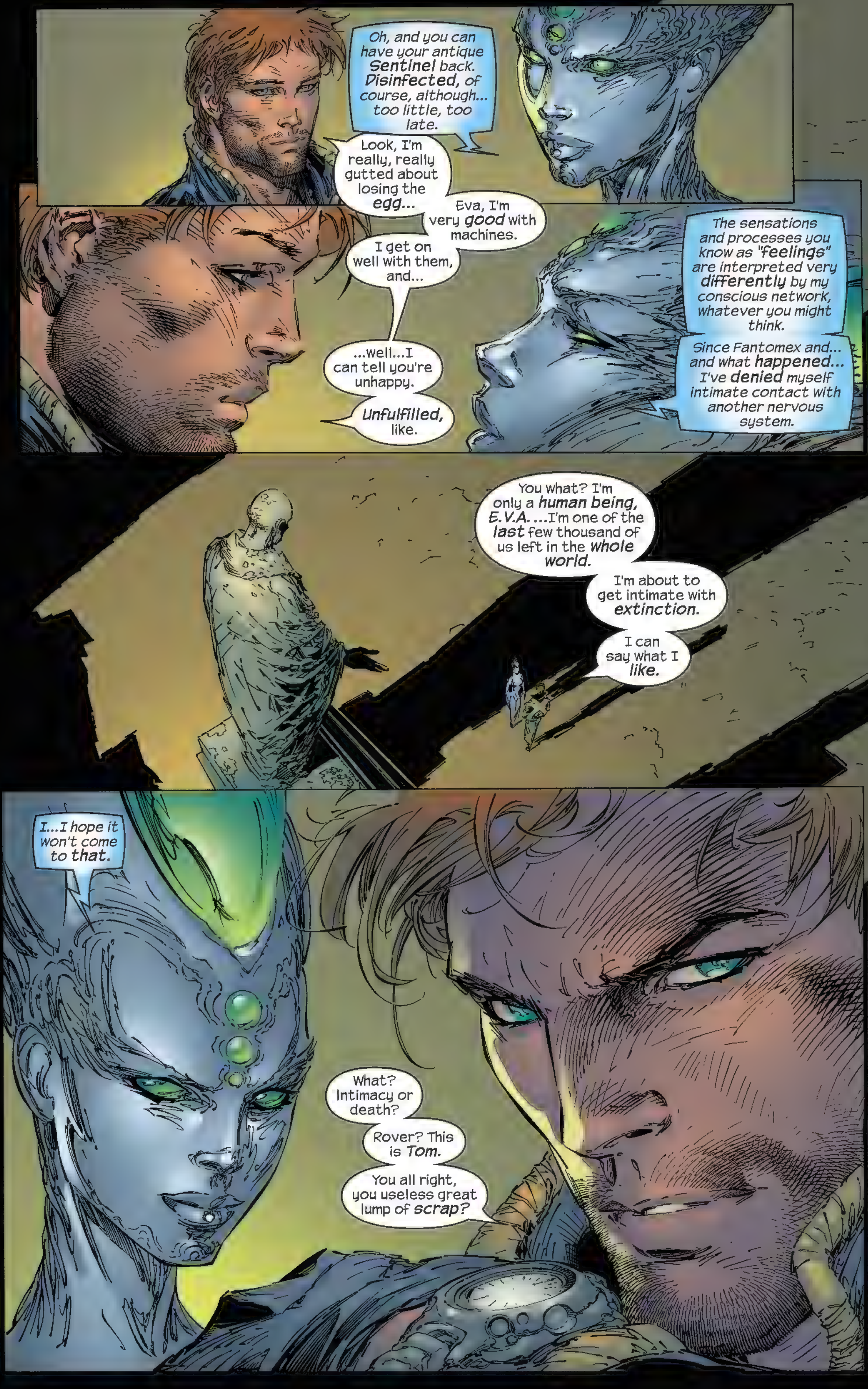

TO YOU AND WHOSE ARMY, SAYS SMITH THE MAKER?
THESE INTEREUROPA ISLANDS ARE FREE! THY SHIP'LL GO NO FURTHER!
You misunderstand me, Maker.
DESTROY.
You'll get your chance soon enough, mate.
I don't like the way this is shaping up, at all.
What's that appearing all 'round him?
I GIVE YOU THE ENDLESS ARMIES OF THE BEAST.
Die for us.
In your huddled thousands... DIE.
I can't bloody do this, Rover!
I can't just fly out on everybody...

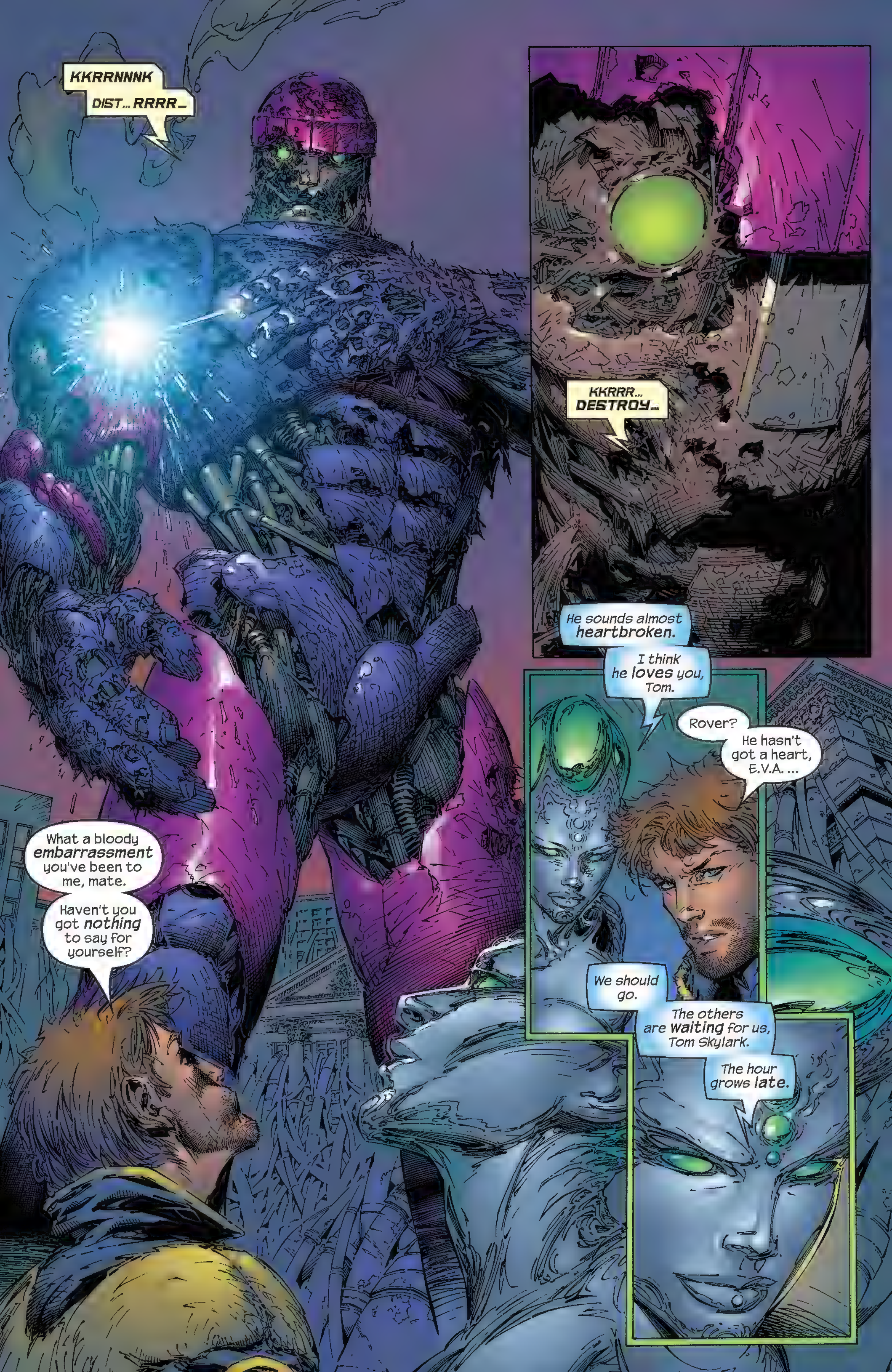

Get the bloody egg to *safety,* Tom, or I'll tell your mum!
BRIAN! WATCH OUT FOR THE CRAWLERS!
Huh! You *think?*
My *Magic Car's* more than a match for *any* winged monkey-man!
I didn't mean that in a *speciesist* way...
It's not about--
--oh, no--
Oh, not *Brian!*
Oh, no... this is for *real.*
SPLKKLSH!
THE PHOENIX EGG'S SECURE! GO, ROVER! GO!
For *real?*
Remember how we said we'd *live forever?*
"This is how the *Proud People* died..."

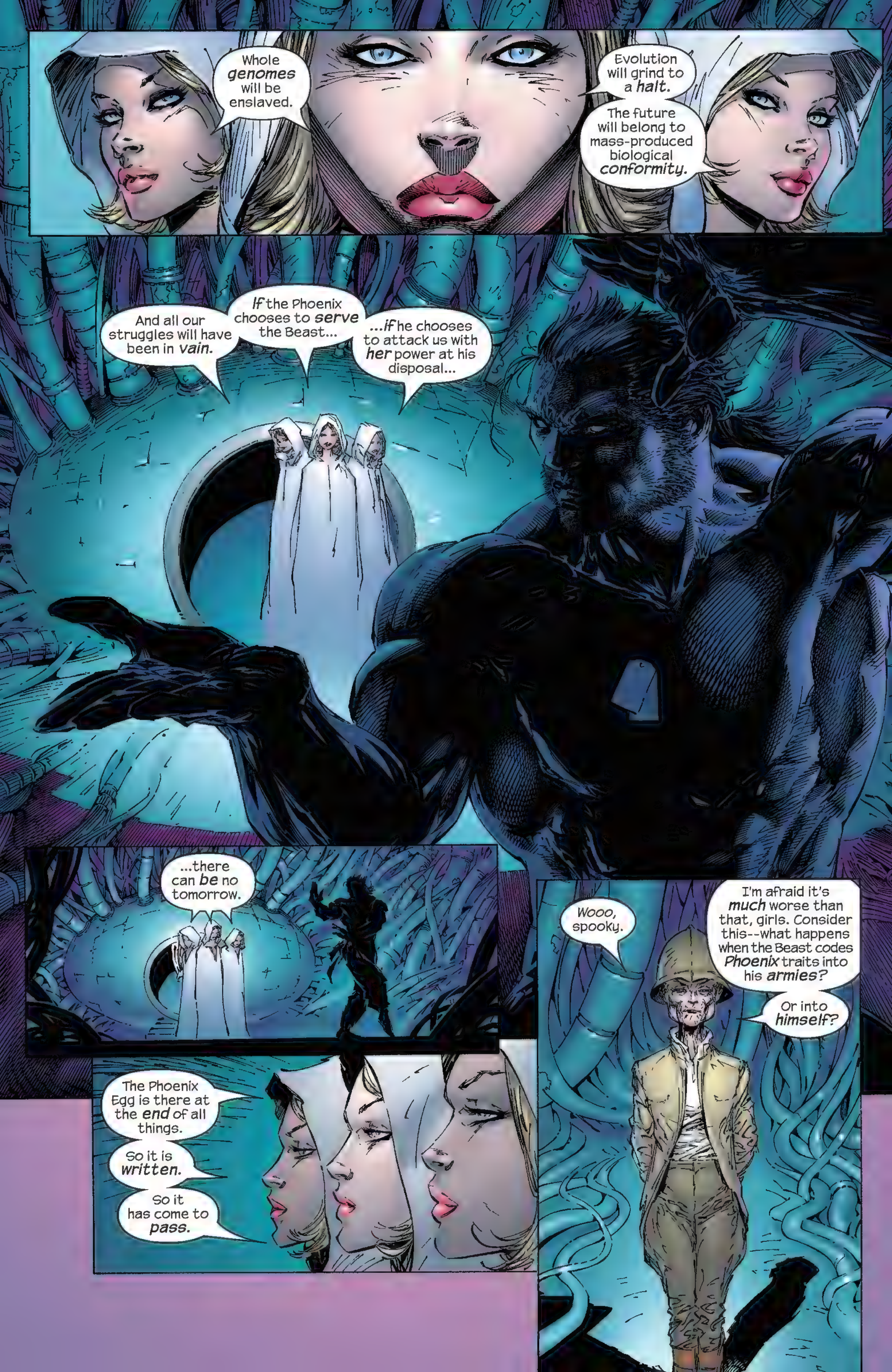

BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
May the Lord help us all.
BAMF!
BAMF!

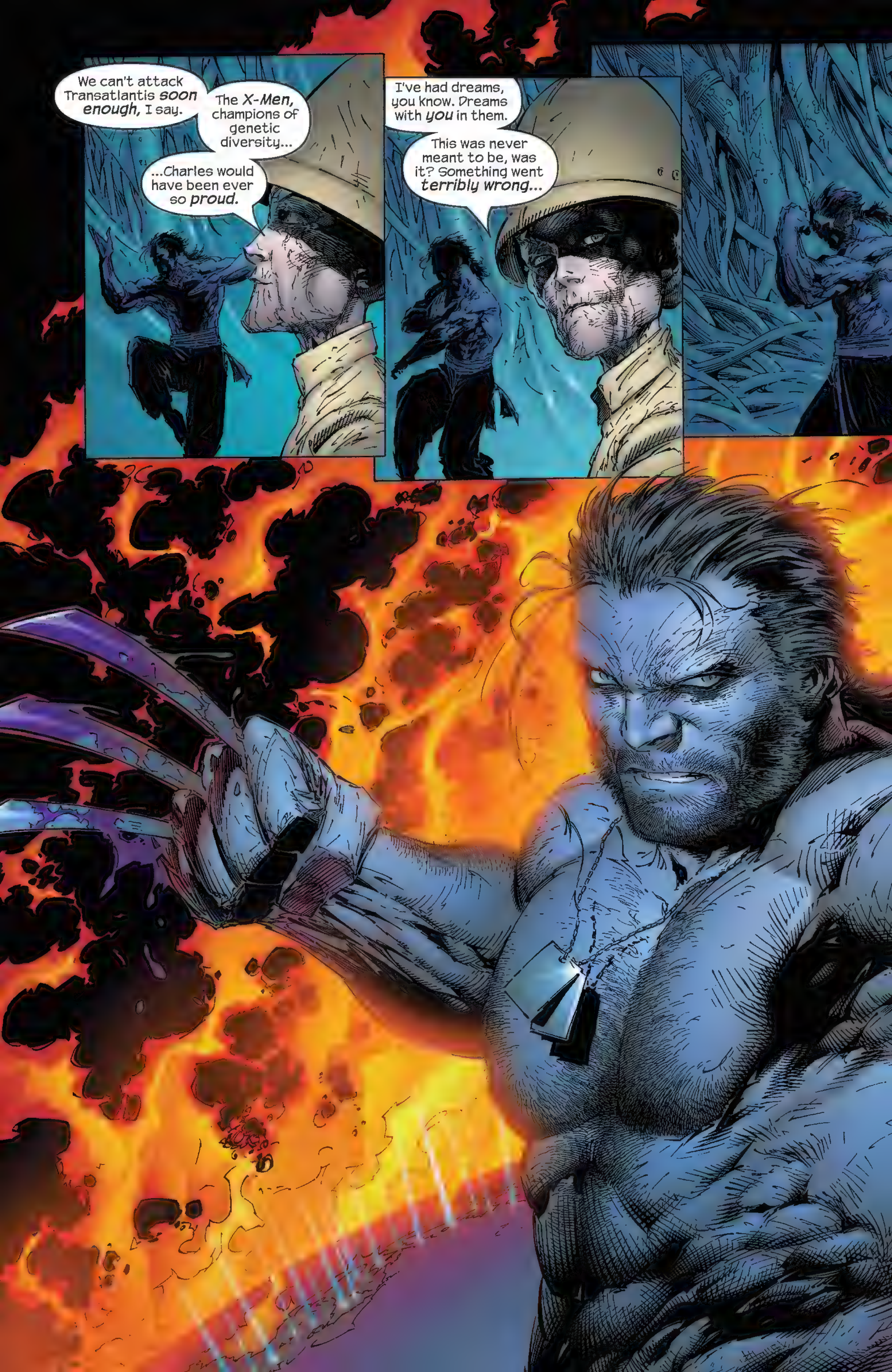

BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
...and plumes of sulphur, *miles* high, drifting north ahead of the Crawler hordes...
...*that's* how I ended up here at *The Institute,* since you happened to ask...

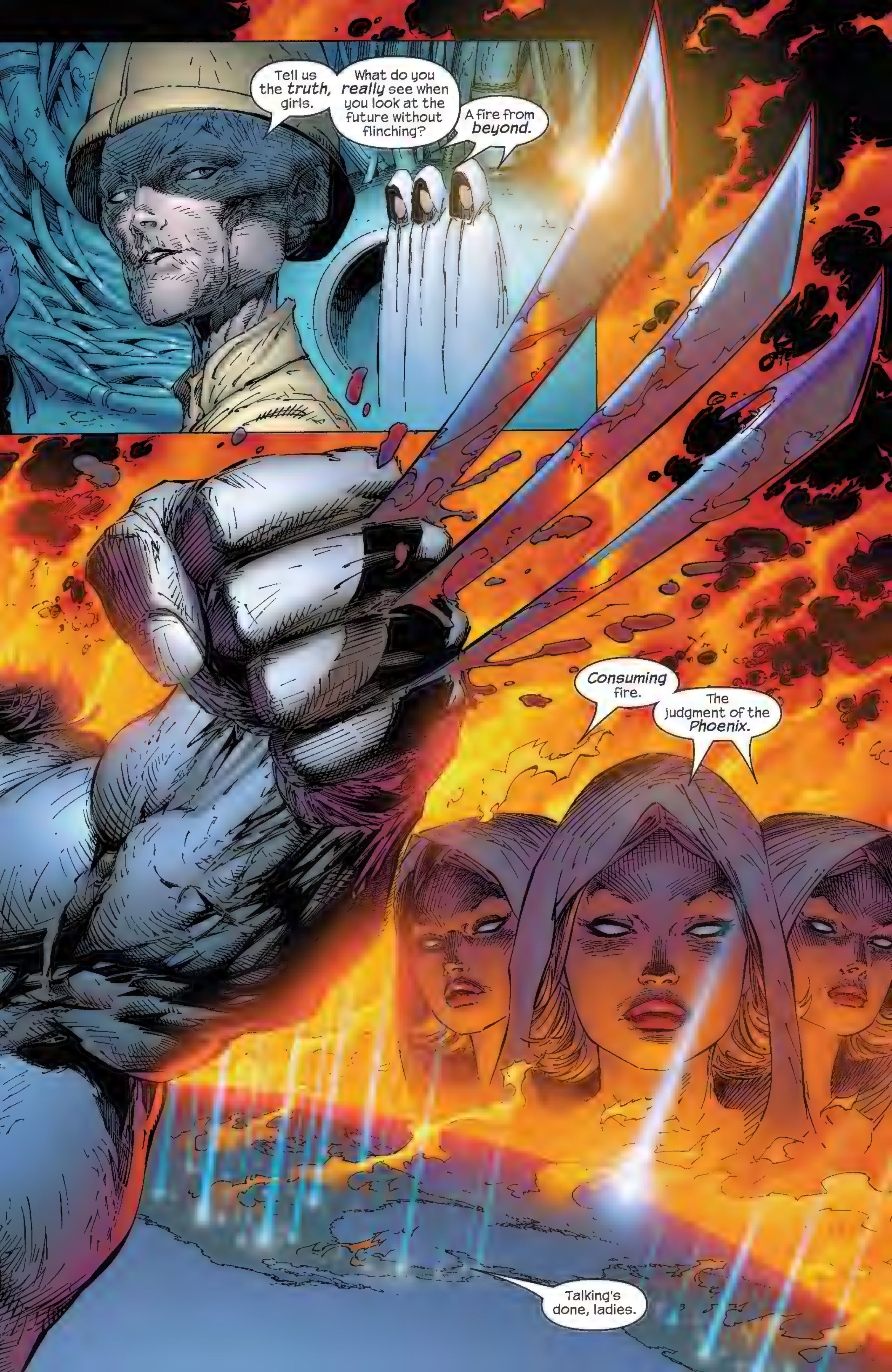

Is this make-believe or real?
Well, I've only gone and lost the bleedin' egg they all died for, haven't I?
Does this shame on my face look make-believe?
E.V.A. ... humans are creepy...
I'm only joking, luv.
Some brave people go down in the fight, but good always wins in the end.
Umm...
...are you totally sure?
Current statistical thinking suggests otherwise.
Uh, right.
They're lovely at that age, ent they?
We've had to change our plans, obviously.
Everyone's preparing for the worst.
We have to attack the Beast directly now, Tom.
Immediately.
The Three-In-One has spoken, and your presence in our X-Men unit would be most valued...

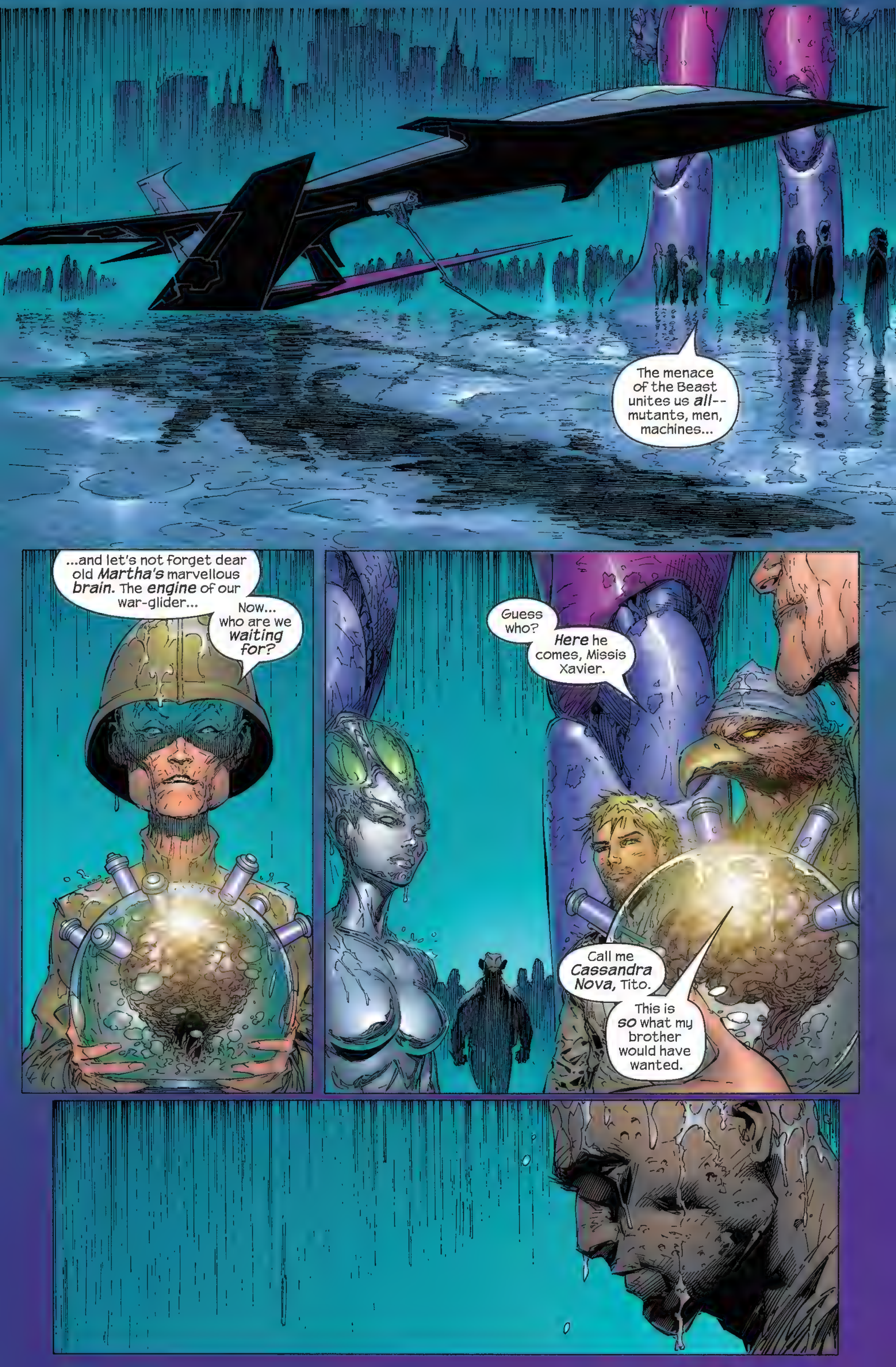

Oh, and you can have your antique Sentinel back. Disinfected, of course, although... too little, too late.
Look, I'm really, really gutted about losing the egg...
Eva, I'm very good with machines.
I get on well with them, and...
...well...I can tell you're unhappy.
Unfulfilled, like.
The sensations and processes you know as "feelings" are interpreted very differently by my conscious network, whatever you might think.
Since Fantomex and... and what happened... I've denied myself intimate contact with another nervous system.
You what? I'm only a human being, E.V.A. ...I'm one of the last few thousand of us left in the whole world.
I'm about to get intimate with extinction.
I can say what I like.
I...I hope it won't come to that.
What? Intimacy or death?
Rover? This is Tom.
You all right, you useless great lump of scrap?

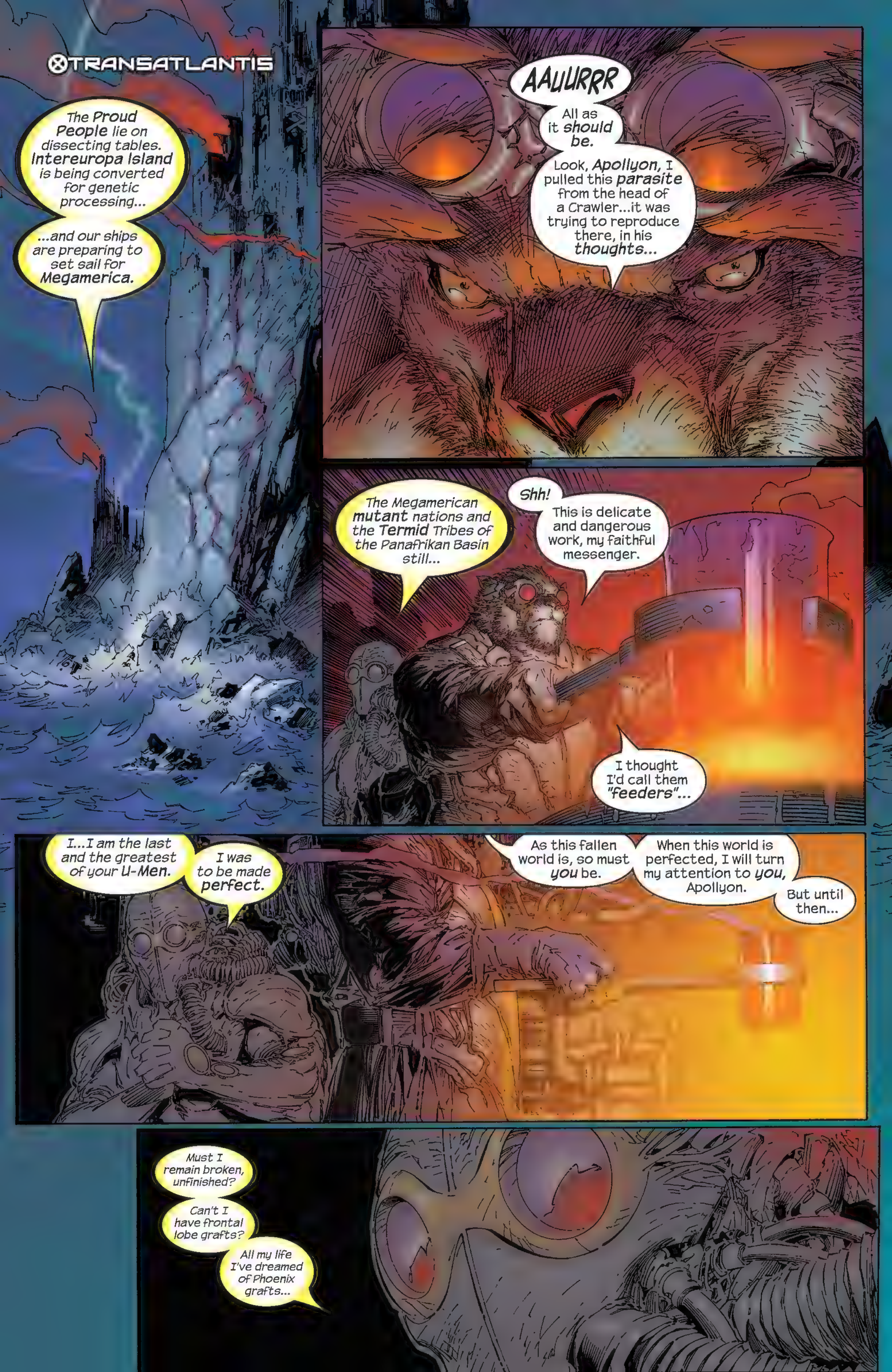

KKRRNNNK
DIST... RRRR...
KKRRR... DESTROY...
He sounds almost heartbroken.
I think he loves you, Tom.
Rover?
He hasn't got a heart, E.V.A. ...
What a bloody embarrassment you've been to me, mate.
Haven't you got nothing to say for yourself?
We should go.
The others are waiting for us, Tom Skylark.
The hour grows late.

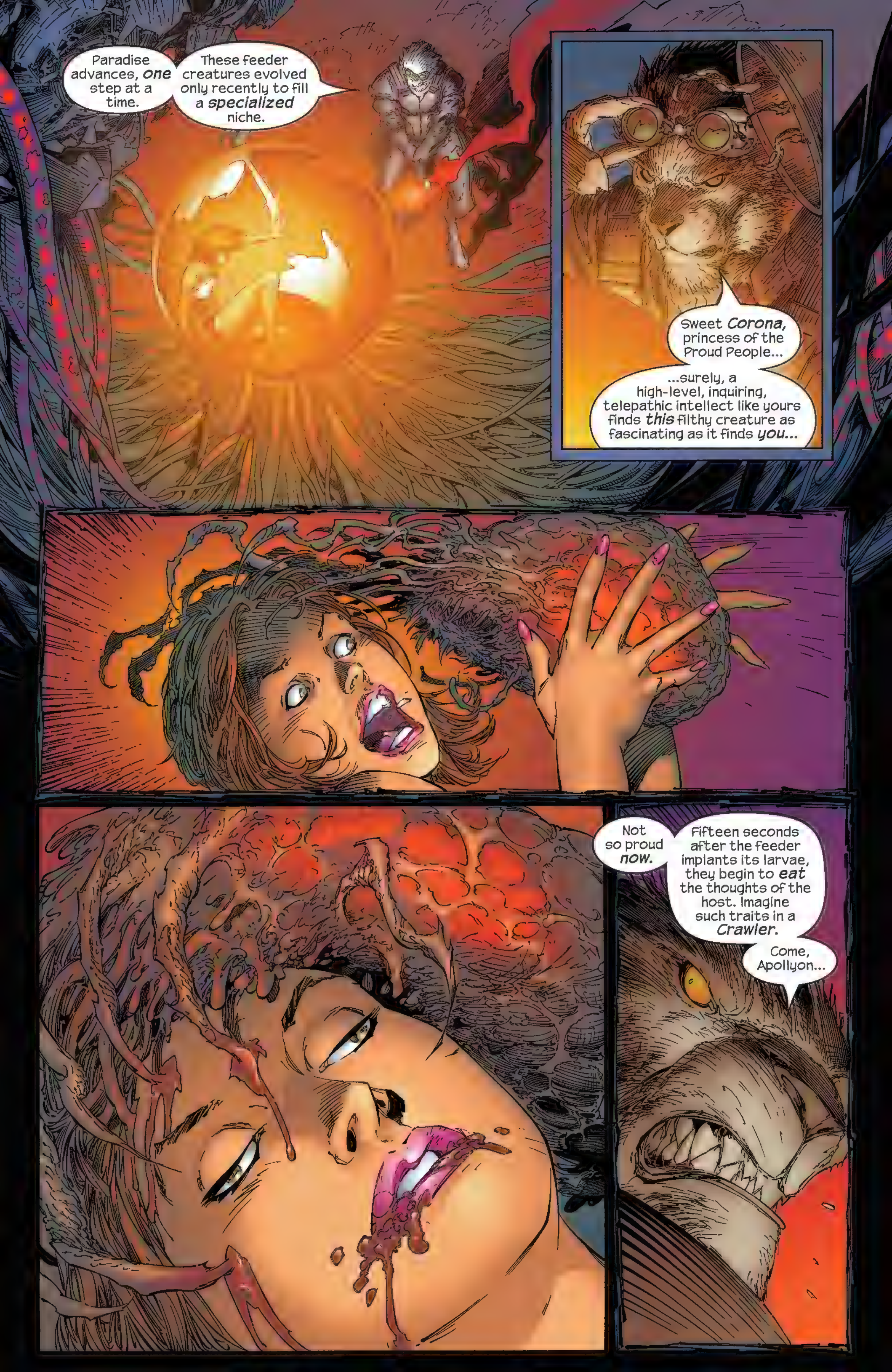

Whole *genomes* will be enslaved.
Evolution will grind to a *halt.*
The future will belong to mass-produced biological *conformity.*
And all our struggles will have been in *vain.*
If the Phoenix chooses to *serve* the Beast...
...if he chooses to attack us with *her* power at his disposal...
...there can *be* no tomorrow.
The Phoenix Egg is there at the *end* of all things.
So it is *written.*
So it has come to *pass.*
Wooo, spooky.
I'm afraid it's *much* worse than that, girls. Consider this--what happens when the Beast codes *Phoenix* traits into his *armies?*
Or into *himself?*

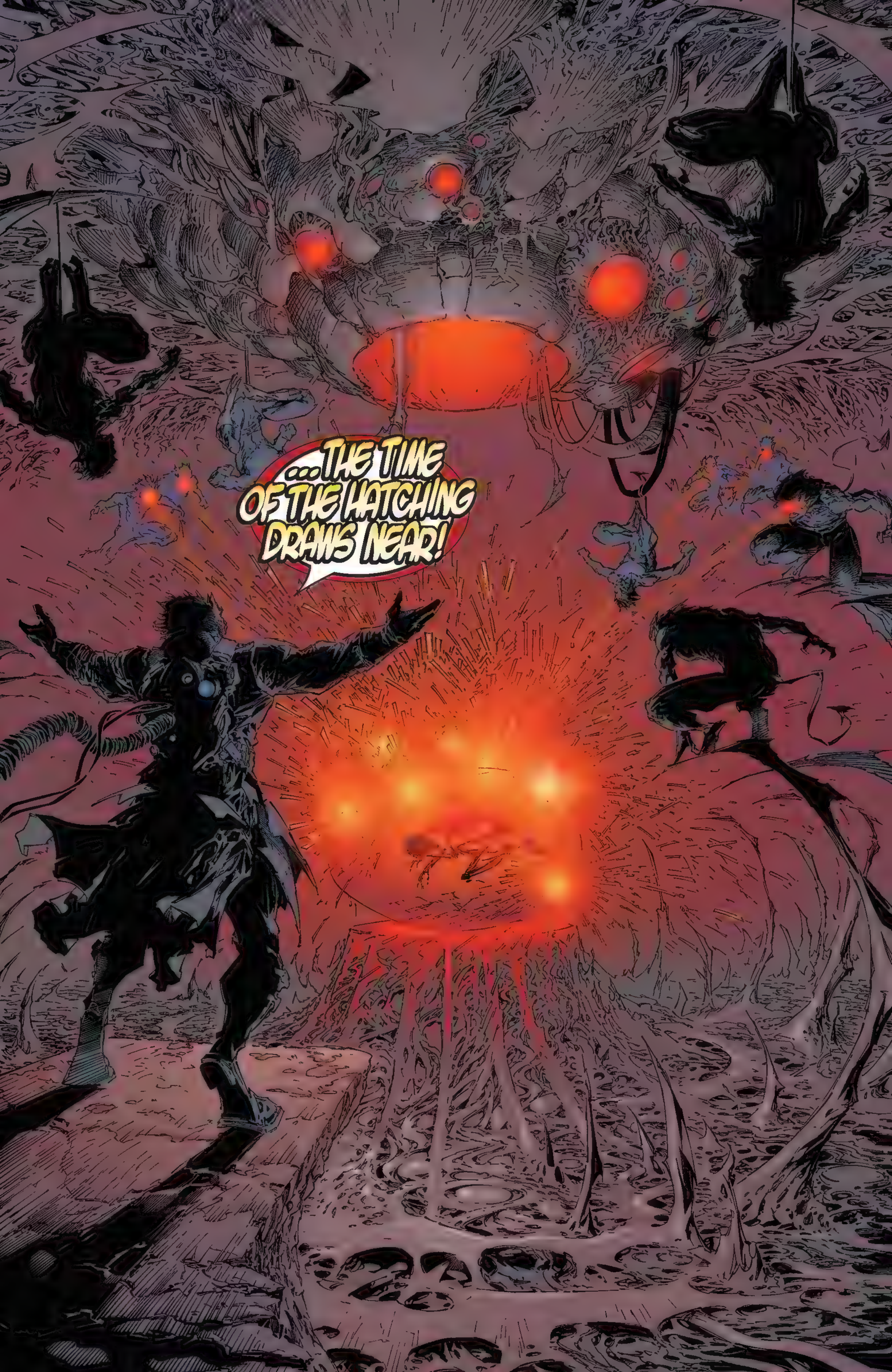

We can't attack Transatlantis *soon enough,* I say.
The *X-Men,* champions of genetic diversity...
...Charles would have been ever so *proud.*
I've had dreams, you know. Dreams with *you* in them.
This was never meant to be, was it? Something went *terribly wrong...*

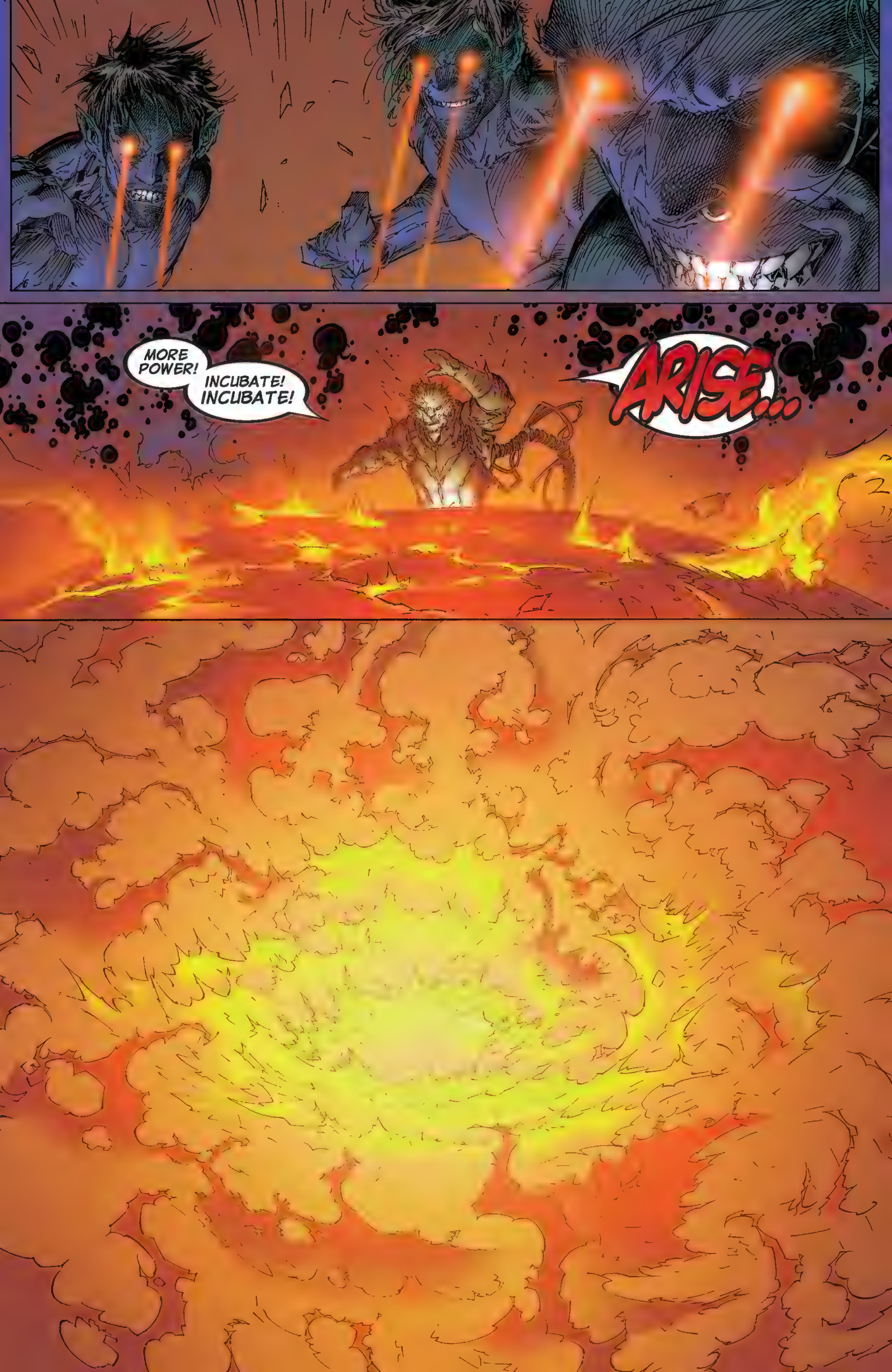

Tell us the *truth,* girls.
What do you *really* see when you look at the future without flinching?
A fire from *beyond.*
Consuming fire.
The judgment of the *Phoenix.*
Talking's done, ladies.

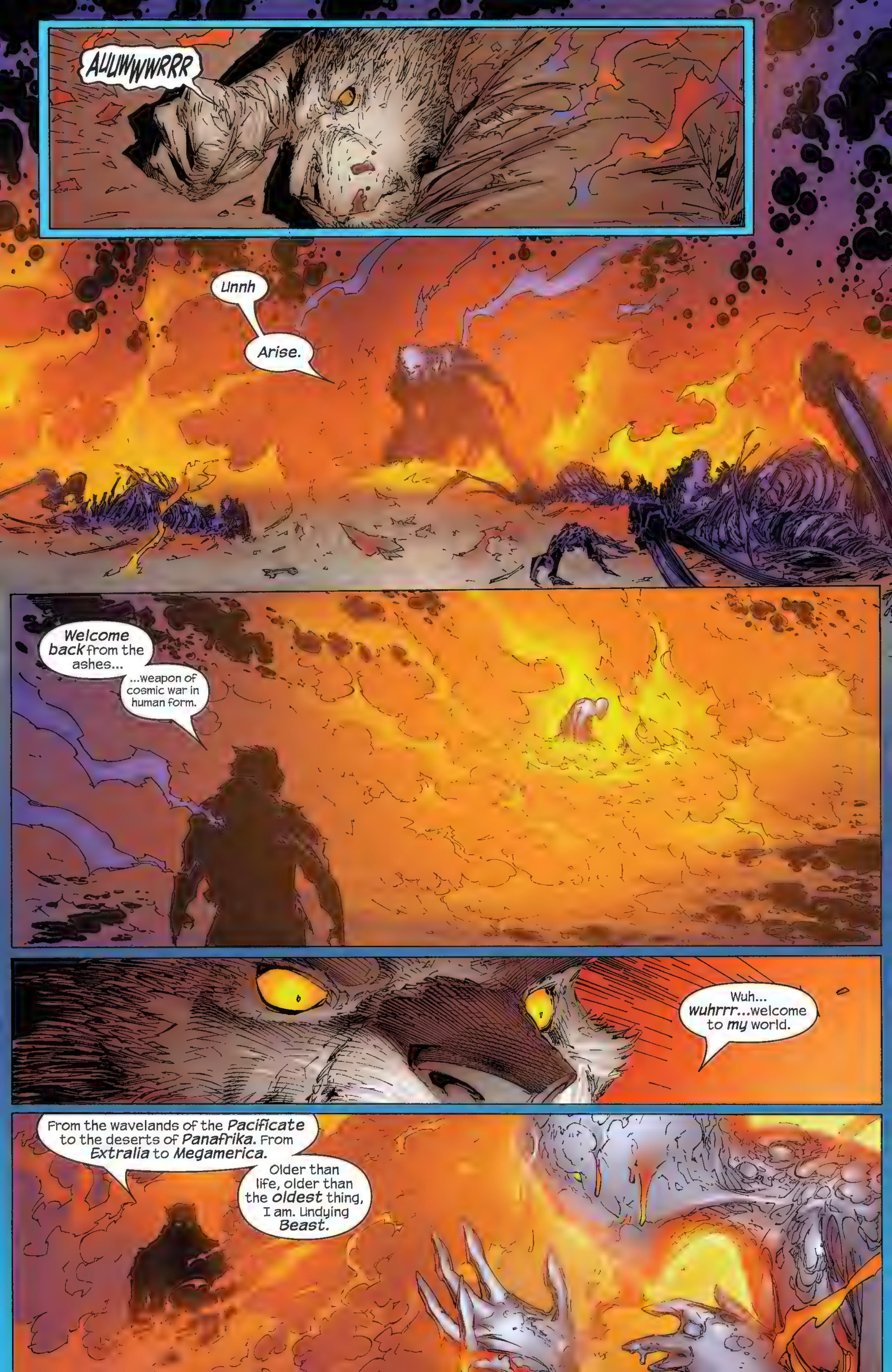

The menace of the Beast unites us *all*-- mutants, men, machines...
...and let's not forget dear old *Martha's* marvellous *brain.* The *engine* of our war-glider...
Now... who are we *waiting for?*
Guess who?
Here he comes, Missis Xavier.
Call me *Cassandra Nova,* Tito.
This is *so* what my brother would have wanted.

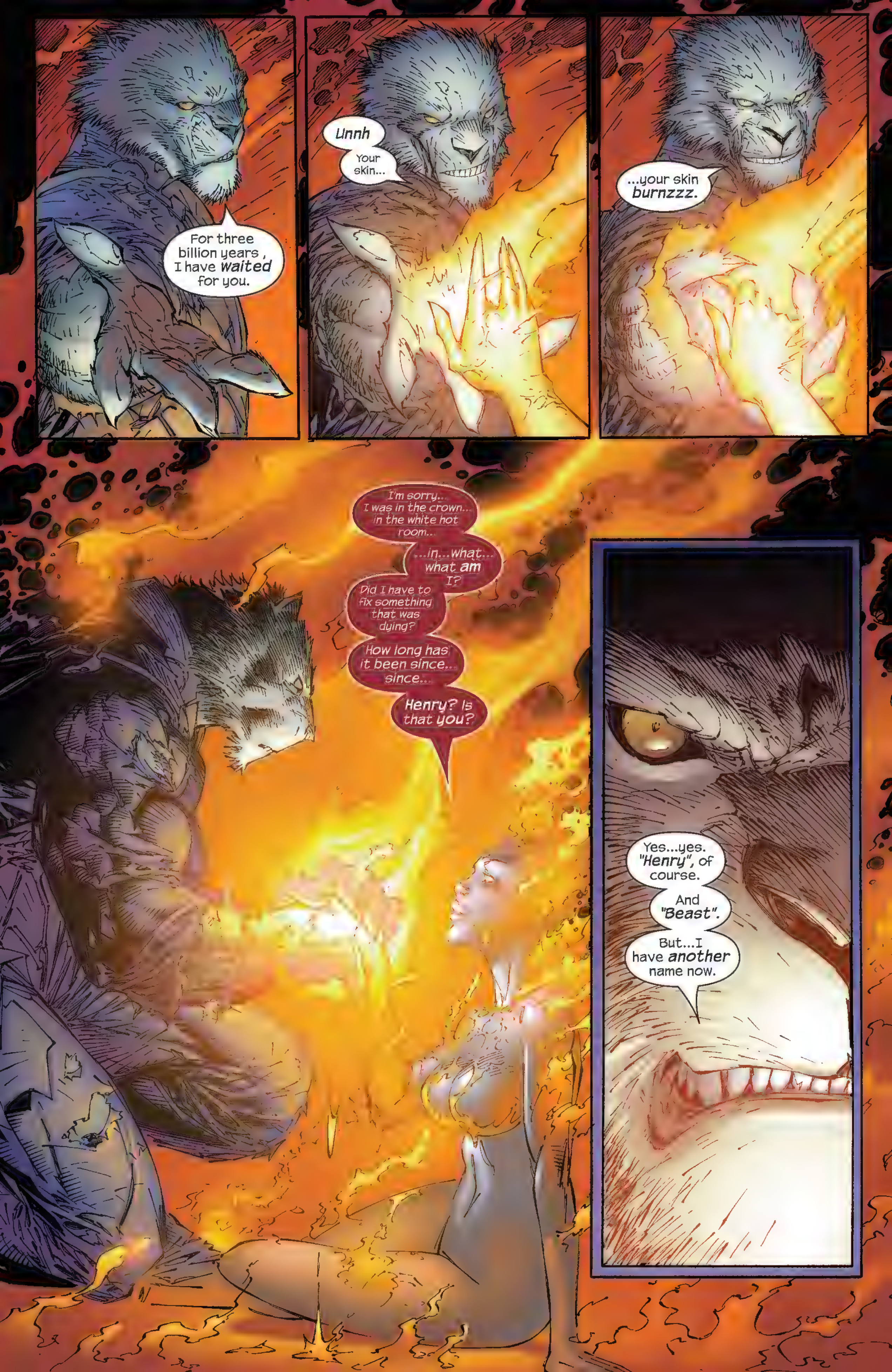

TRANSATLANTIS
The Proud People lie on dissecting tables. Intereuropa Island is being converted for genetic processing...
...and our ships are preparing to set sail for Megamerica.
AAUURRR
All as it should be.
Look, Apollyon, I pulled this parasite from the head of a Crawler...it was trying to reproduce there, in his thoughts...
The Megamerican mutant nations and the Termid Tribes of the Panafrikan Basin still...
Shh!
This is delicate and dangerous work, my faithful messenger.
I thought I'd call them "feeders"...
I...I am the last and the greatest of your U-Men.
I was to be made perfect.
As this fallen world is, so must you be.
When this world is perfected, I will turn my attention to you, Apollyon.
But until then...
Must I remain broken, unfinished?
Can't I have frontal lobe grafts?
All my life I've dreamed of Phoenix grafts...

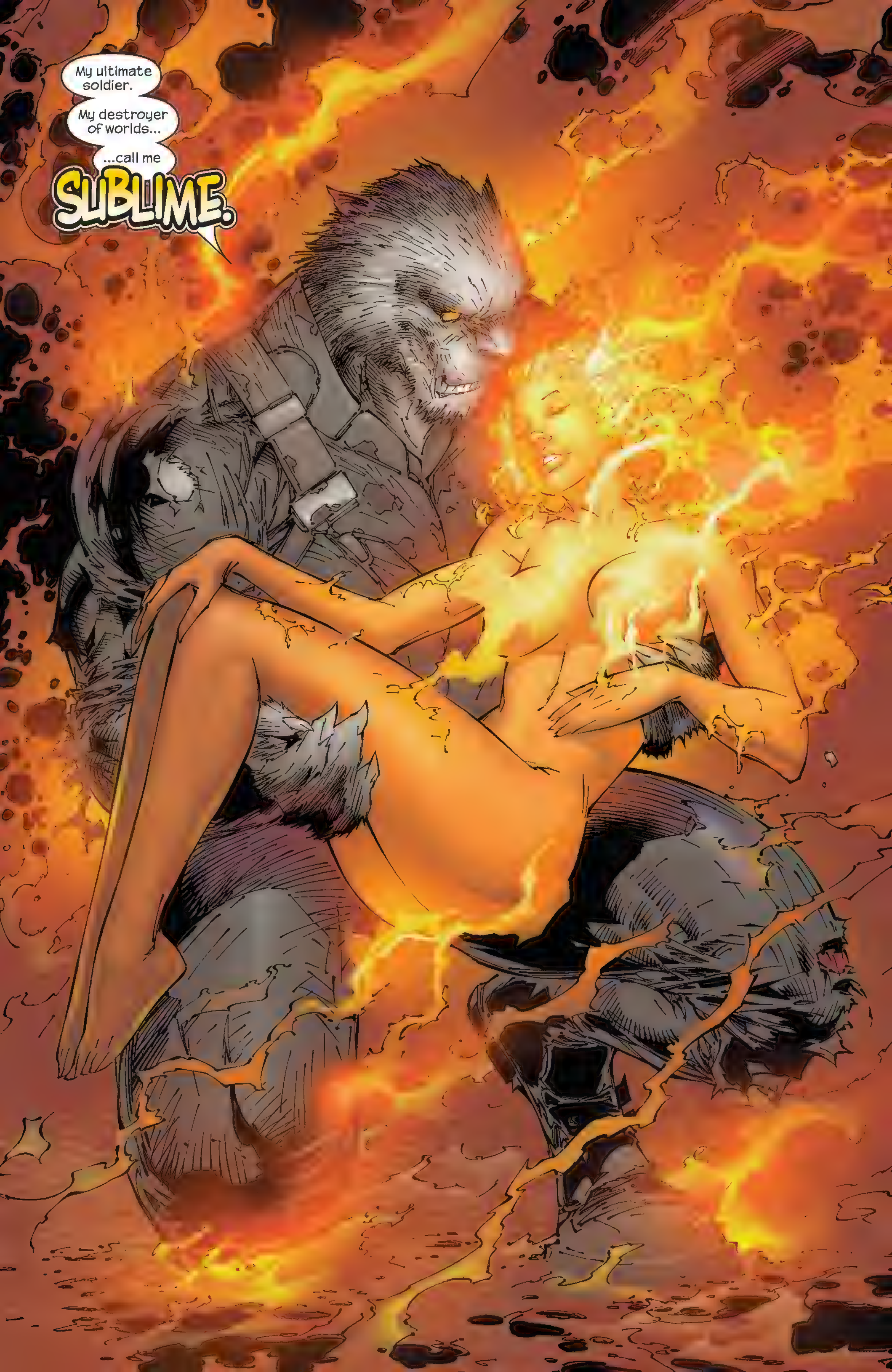

Paradise advances, *one* step at a time.
These feeder creatures evolved only recently to fill a *specialized* niche.
Sweet *Corona,* princess of the Proud People...
...surely, a high-level, inquiring, telepathic intellect like yours finds *this* filthy creature as fascinating as it finds *you...*
Not so proud *now.*
Fifteen seconds after the feeder implants its larvae, they begin to *eat* the thoughts of the host. Imagine such traits in a *Crawler.*
Come, Apollyon...

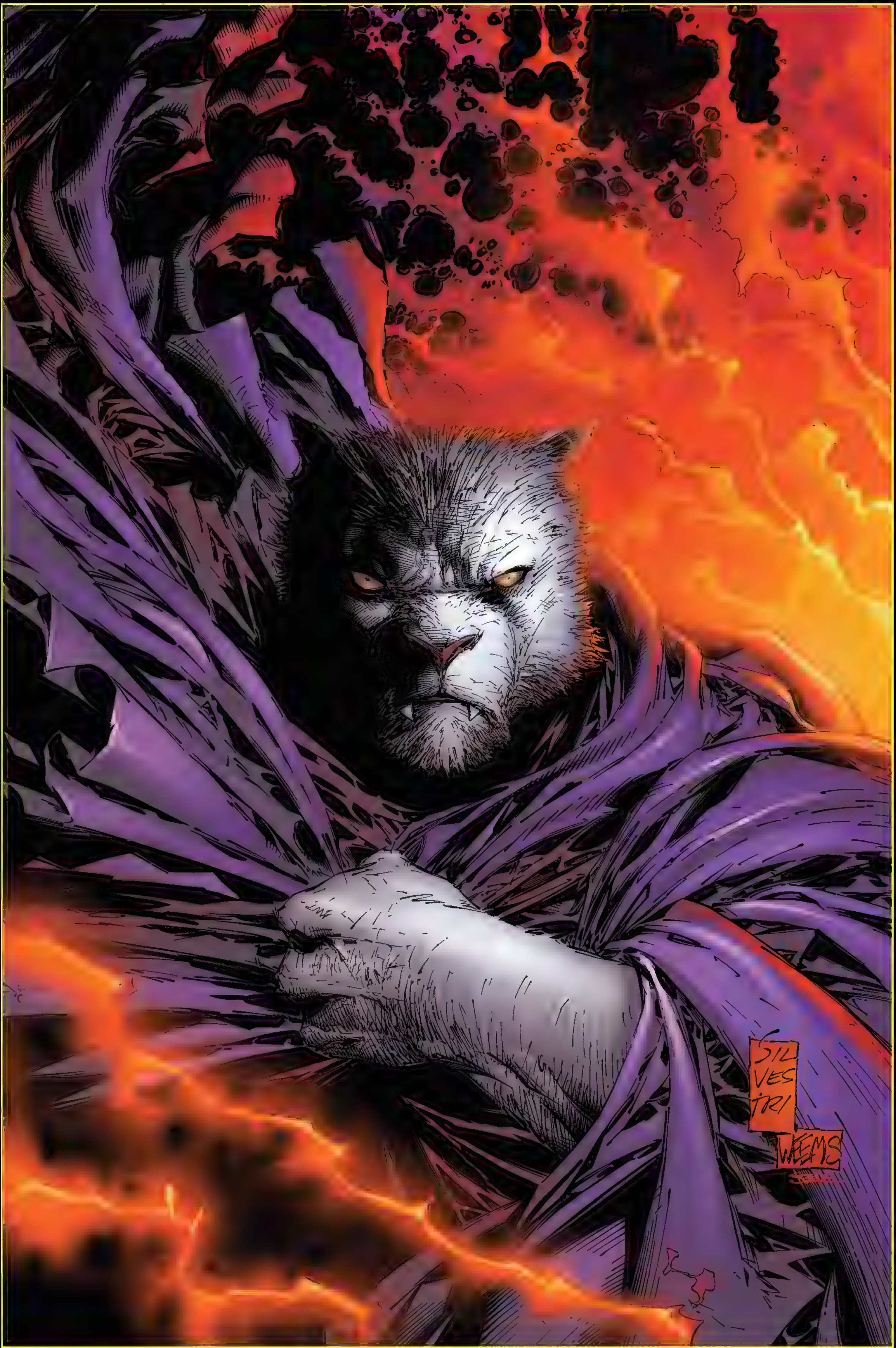

...THE TIME OF THE HATCHING DRAWS NEAR!


MORE POWER!
INCUBATE! INCUBATE!
ARISE...

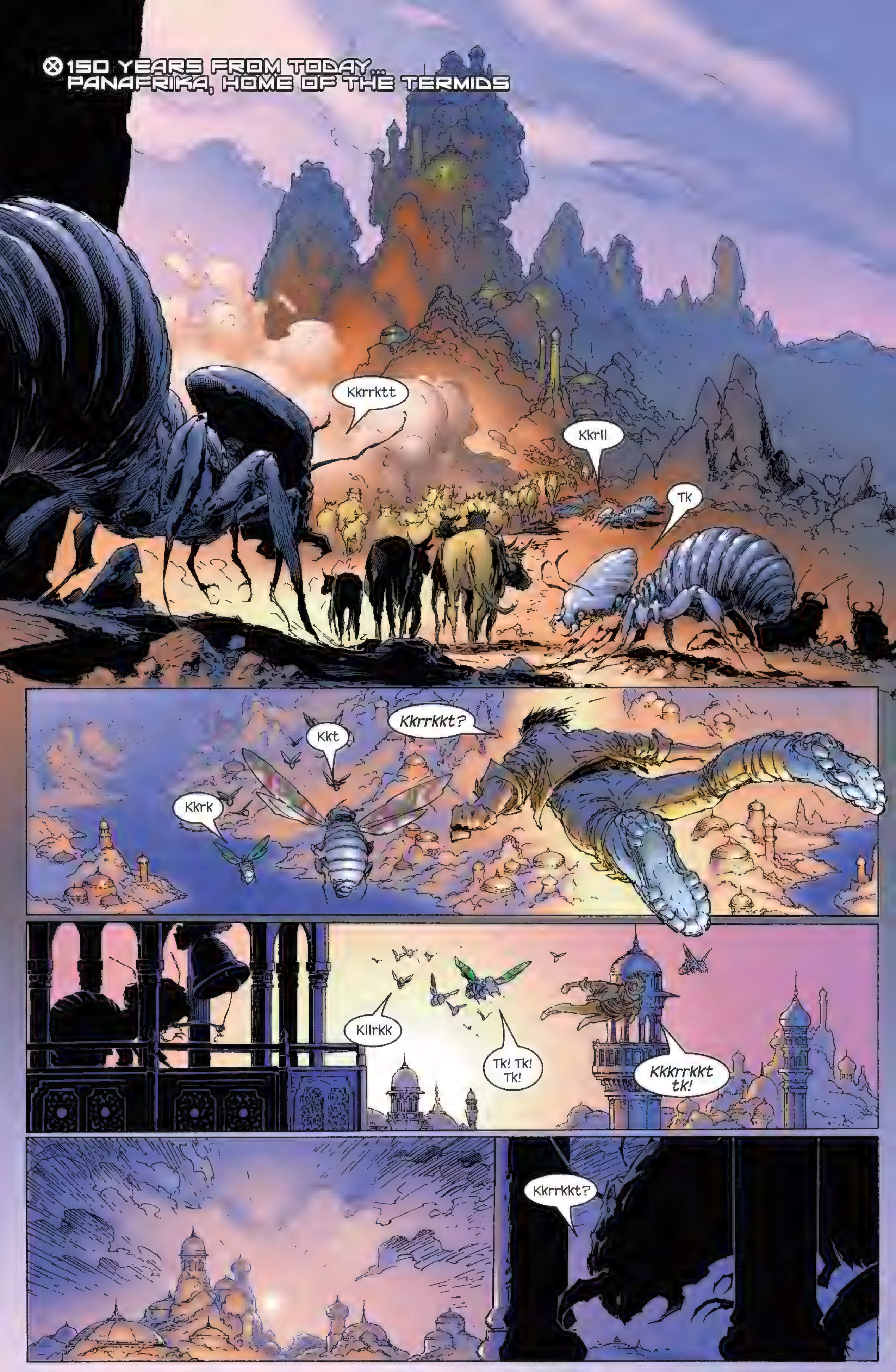

AUUWWWRRR
Unnh
Arise.
Welcome back from the ashes...
...weapon of cosmic war in human form.
Wuh... wuhrrr...welcome to my world.
From the wavelands of the Pacificate to the deserts of Panafrika. From Extralia to Megamerica.
Older than life, older than the oldest thing, I am. Undying Beast.

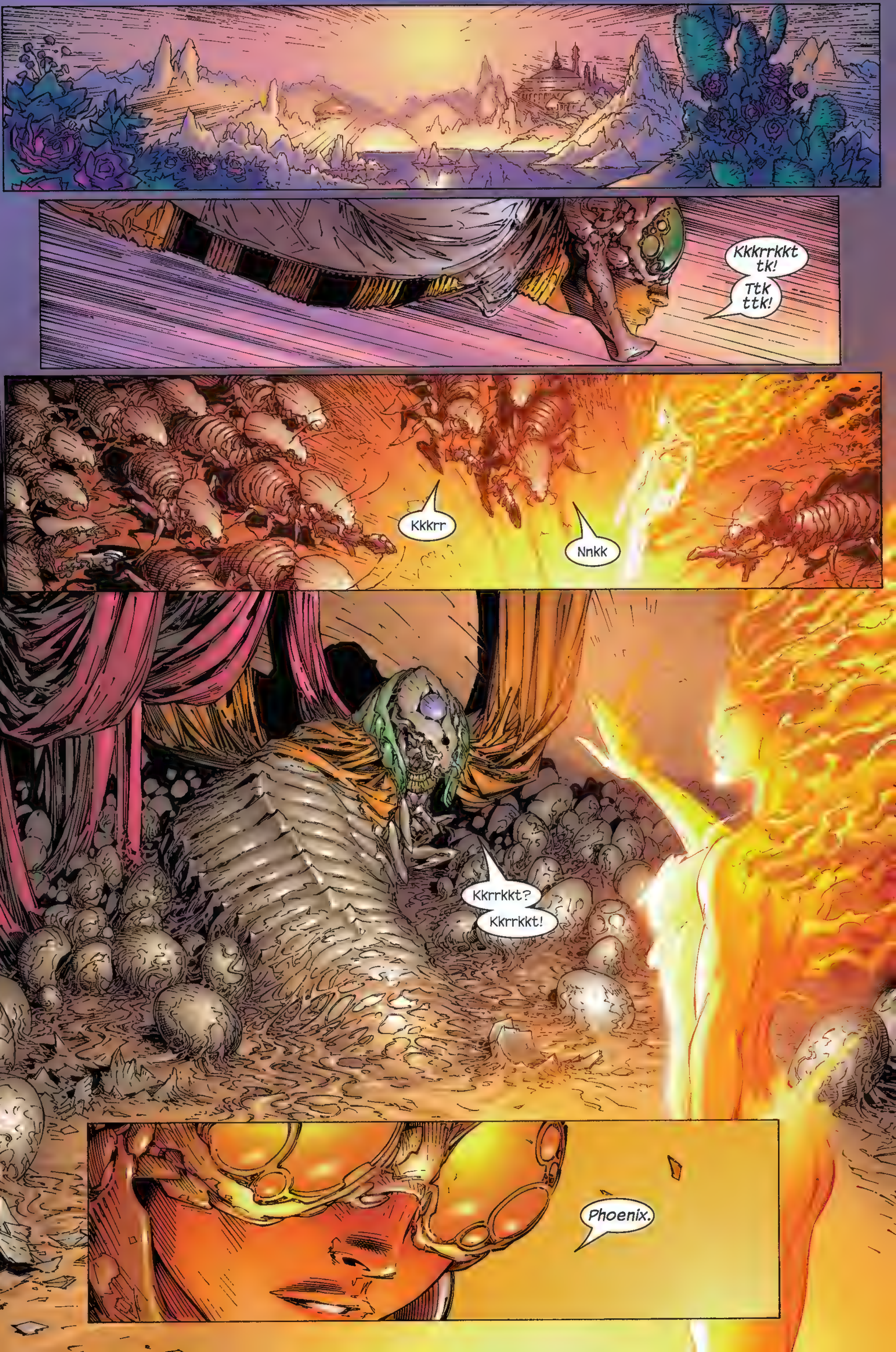

For three billion years, I have waited for you.
Unnh
Your skin...
...your skin burnzzz.
I'm sorry... I was in the crown... in the white hot room...
...in...what... what am I?
Did I have to fix something that was dying?
How long has it been since... since...
Henry? Is that you?
Yes...yes. "Henry", of course.
And "Beast".
But...I have another name now.

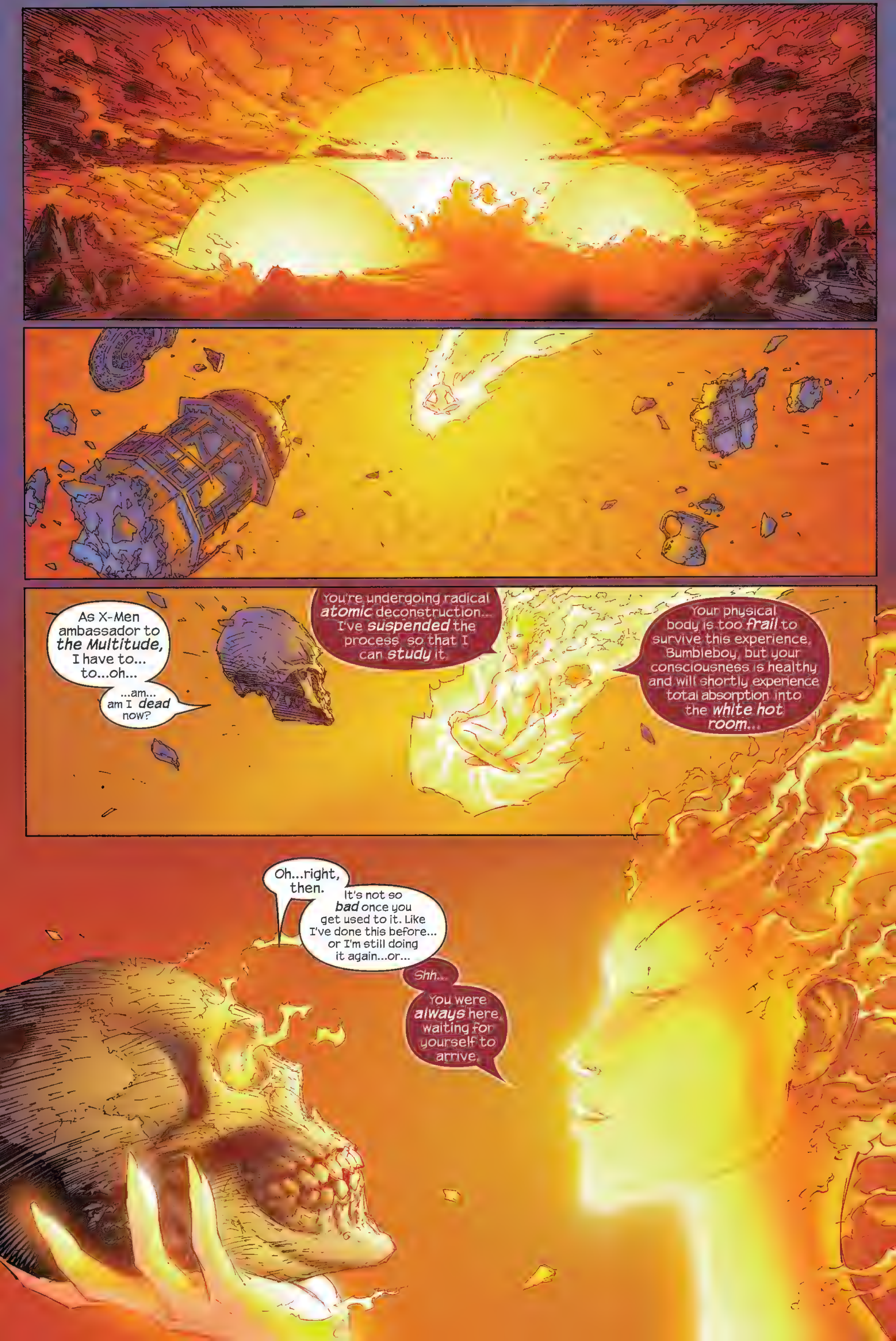

My ultimate soldier.
My destroyer of worlds...
...call me
SUBLIME.

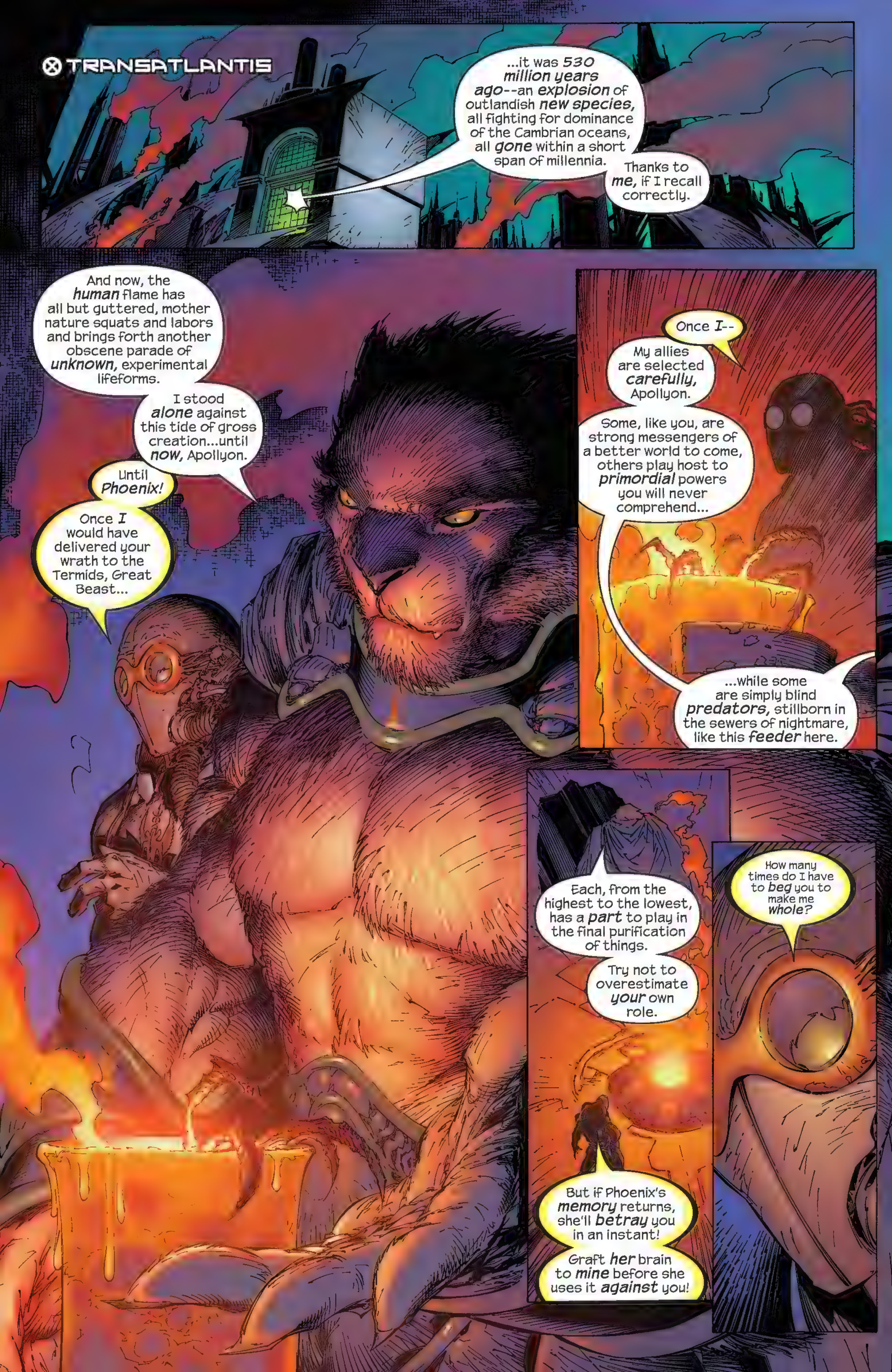

SIL VES TRI
WEEMS

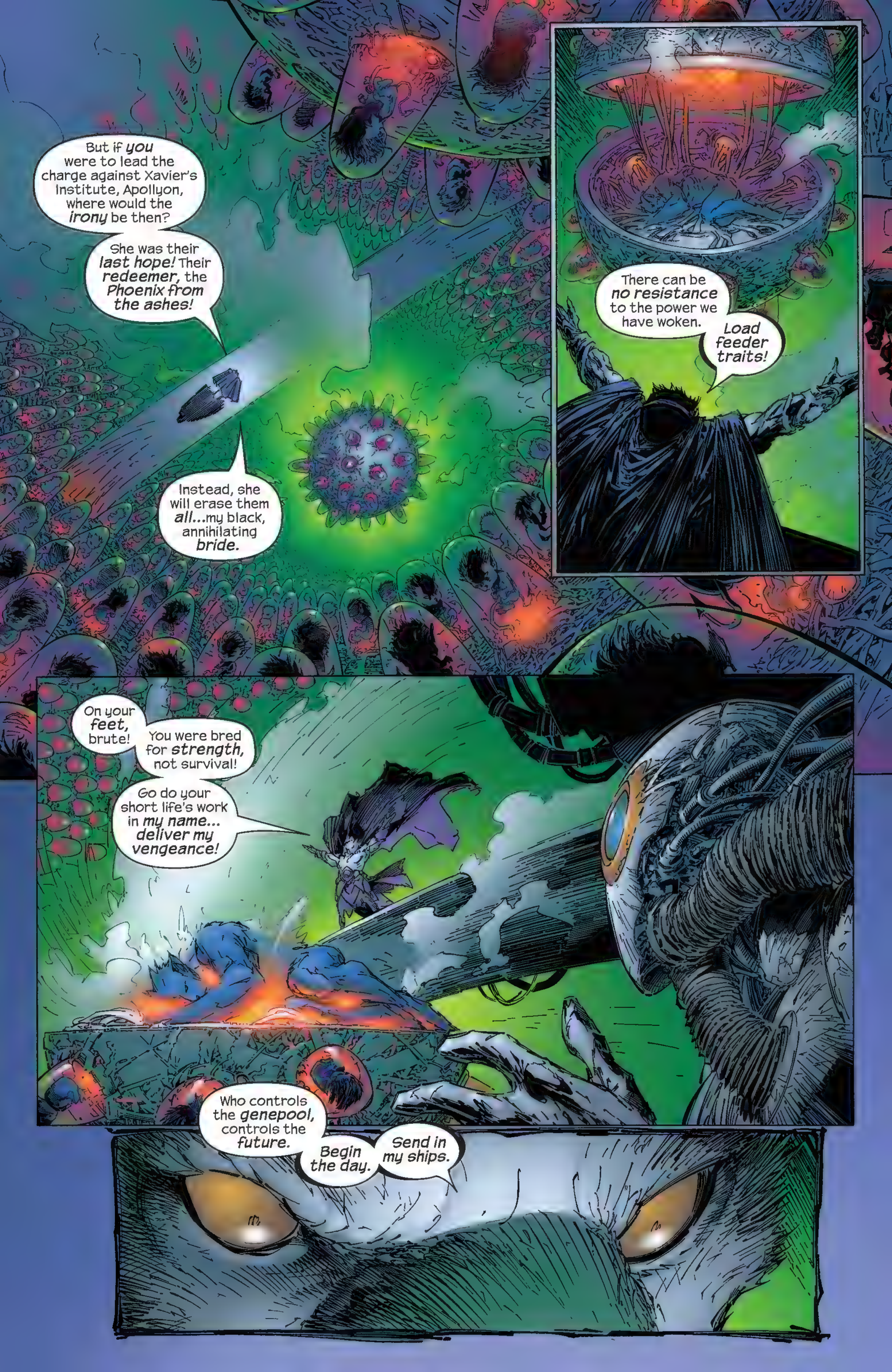
NEW X-MEN #153
"HERE COMES TOMORROW PART THREE"

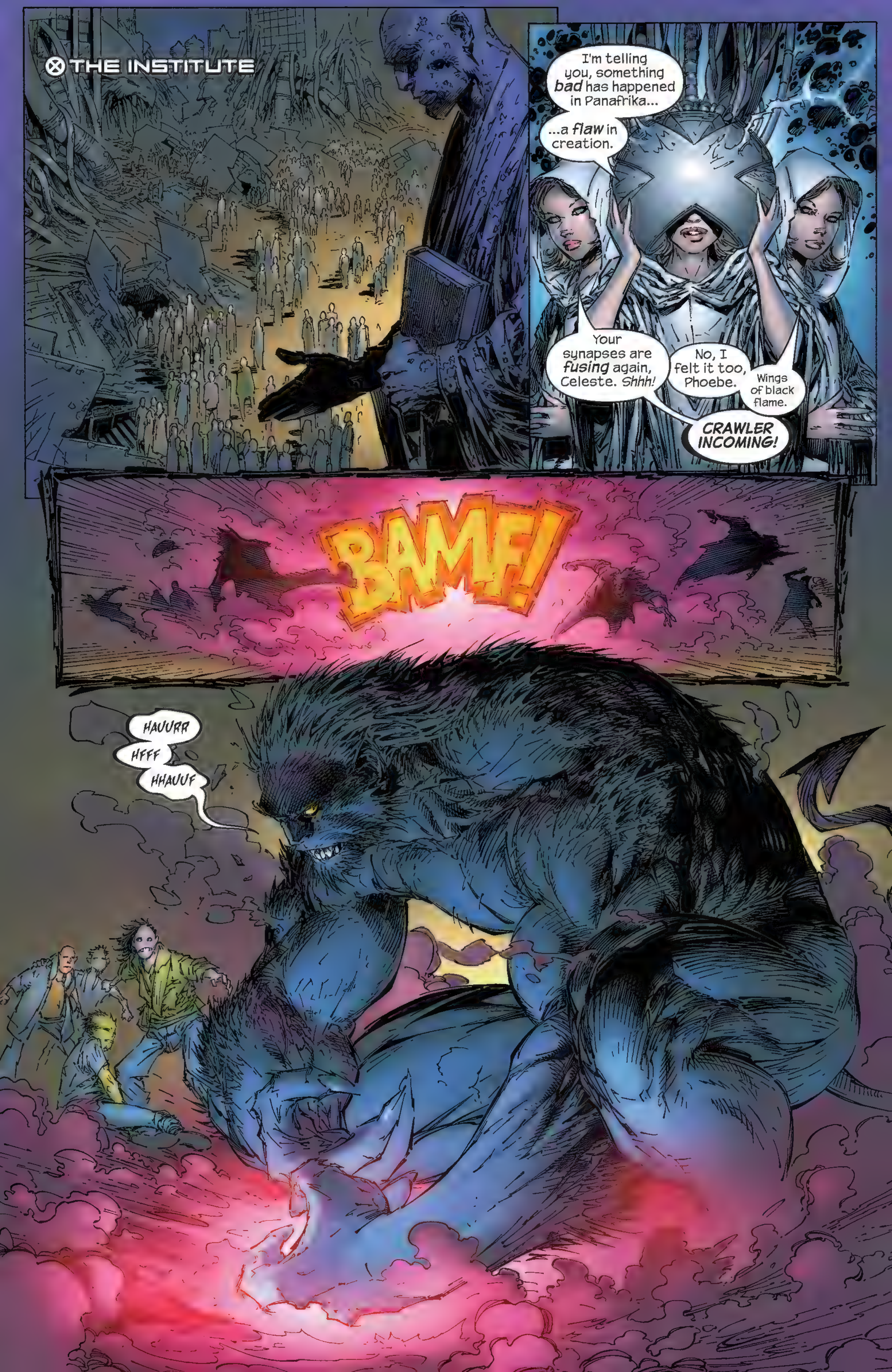

150 YEARS FROM TODAY...
PANAFRIKA, HOME OF THE TERMIDS
Kkrrktt
Kkrll
Tk
Kkrk
Kkt
Kkrrkkt?
Kllrkk
Tk! Tk! Tk!
Kkkrrkkt tk!
Kkrrkkt?

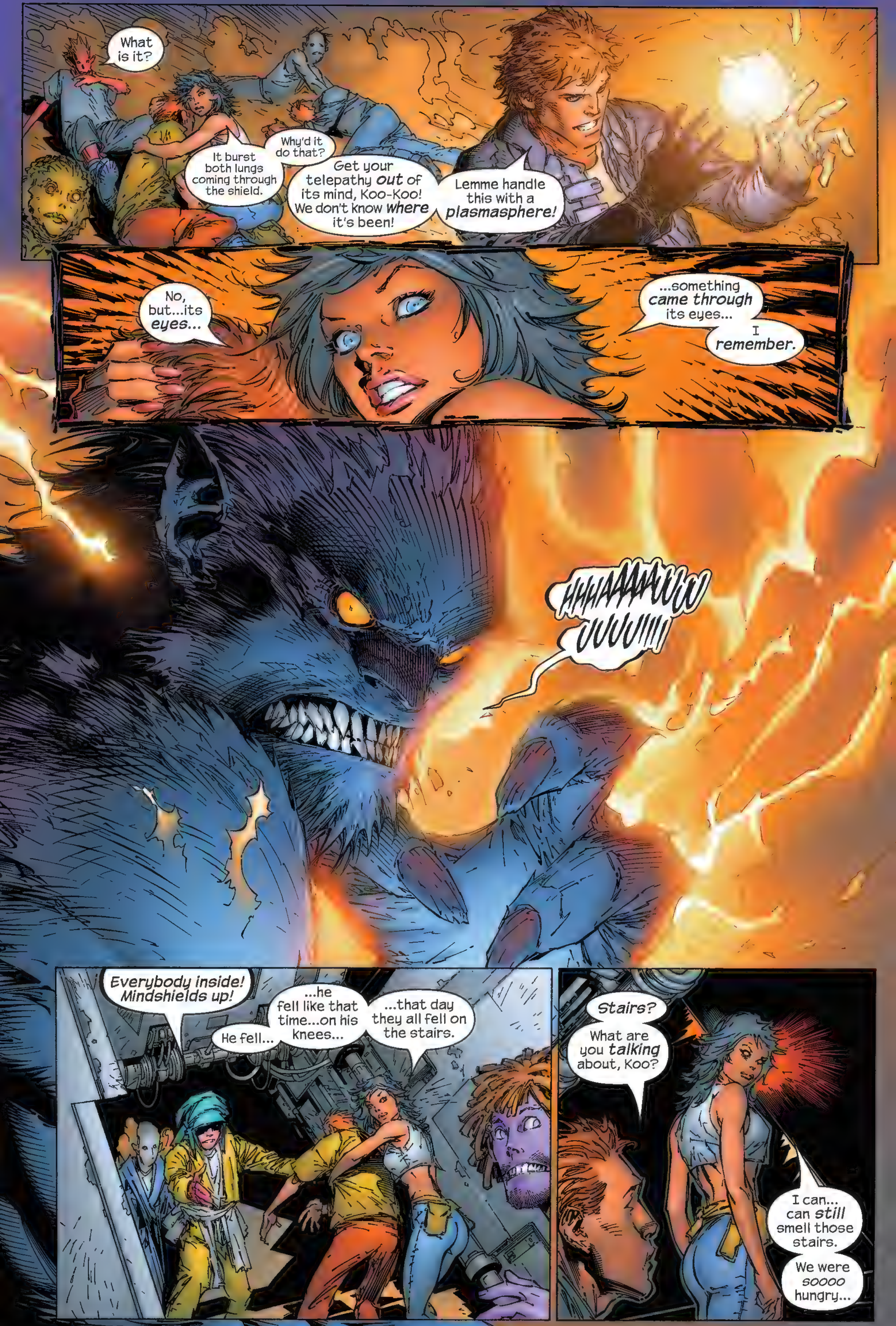

Kkkrrkkt tk!
Ttk ttk!
Kkkrr
Nnkk
Kkrrkkt?
Kkrrkkt!
Phoenix.

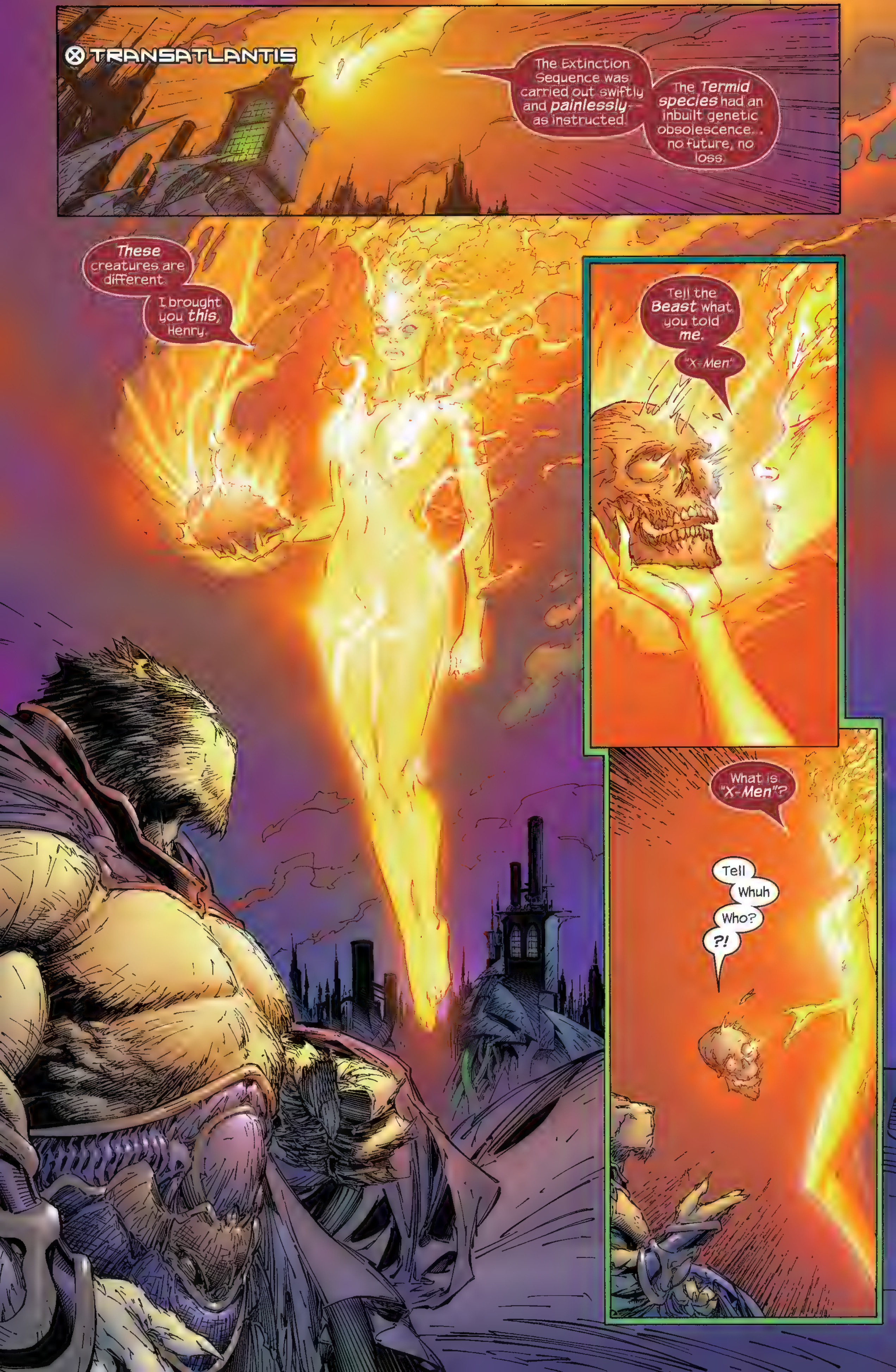

As X-Men ambassador to *the Multitude,* I have to... to...oh...
...am... am I *dead* now?
You're undergoing radical *atomic* deconstruction... I've *suspended* the process, so that I can *study* it.
Your physical body is too *frail* to survive this experience, Bumbleboy, but your consciousness is healthy and will shortly experience total absorption into the *white hot room...*
Oh...right, then.
It's not so *bad* once you get used to it. Like I've done this before... or I'm still doing it again...or...
Shh...
You were *always* here, waiting for yourself to arrive.

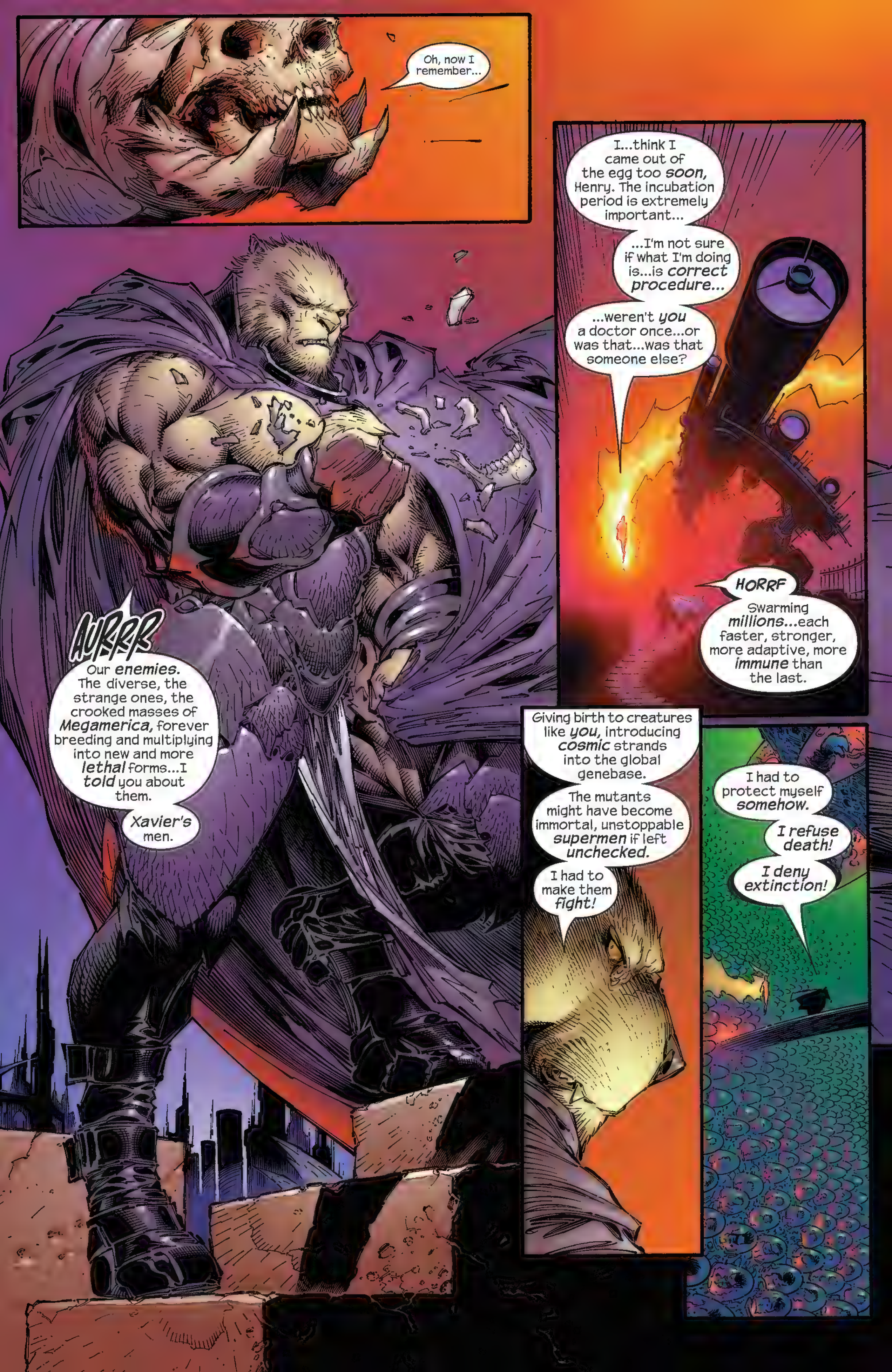

TRANSATLANTIS
...it was 530 million years ago--an explosion of outlandish new species, all fighting for dominance of the Cambrian oceans, all gone within a short span of millennia.
Thanks to me, if I recall correctly.
And now, the human flame has all but guttered, mother nature squats and labors and brings forth another obscene parade of unknown, experimental lifeforms.
I stood alone against this tide of gross creation...until now, Apollyon.
Until Phoenix!
Once I would have delivered your wrath to the Termids, Great Beast...
Once I--
My allies are selected carefully, Apollyon.
Some, like you, are strong messengers of a better world to come, others play host to primordial powers you will never comprehend...
...while some are simply blind predators, stillborn in the sewers of nightmare, like this feeder here.
Each, from the highest to the lowest, has a part to play in the final purification of things.
Try not to overestimate your own role.
But if Phoenix's memory returns, she'll betray you in an instant!
Graft her brain to mine before she uses it against you!
How many times do I have to beg you to make me whole?

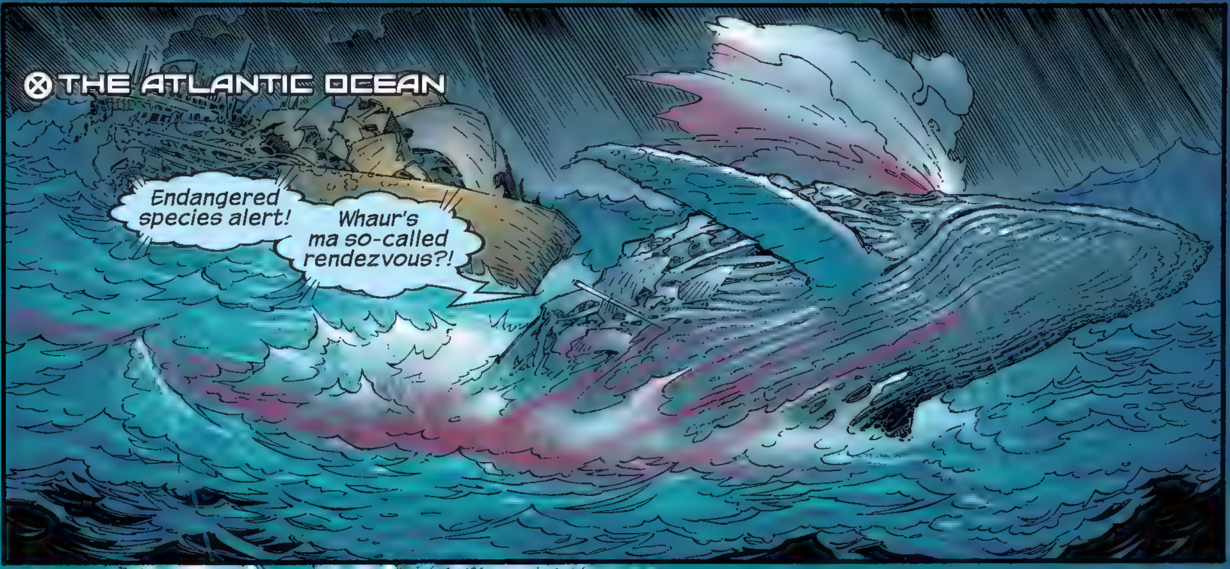

But if *you* were to lead the charge against Xavier's Institute, Apollyon, where would the *irony* be then?
She was their *last hope!* Their *redeemer,* the *Phoenix from the ashes!*
Instead, she will erase them *all*...my black, annihilating *bride.*
There can be *no resistance* to the power we have woken.
Load feeder traits!
On your *feet,* brute!
You were bred for *strength,* not survival!
Go do your short life's work in *my name... deliver my vengeance!*
Who controls the *genepool,* controls the *future.*
Begin the day.
Send in my ships.

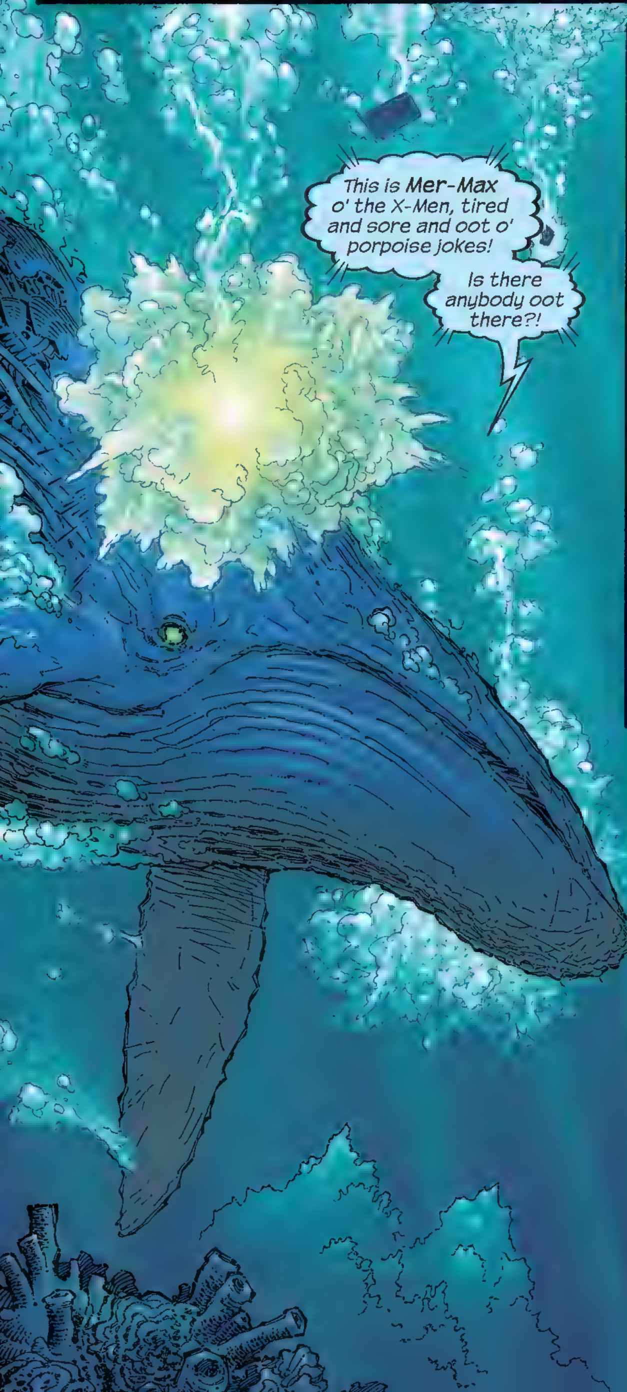

THE INSTITUTE
I'm telling you, something *bad* has happened in Panafrika...
...a *flaw* in creation.
Your synapses are *fusing* again, Celeste. *Shhh!*
No, I felt it too, Phoebe.
Wings of black flame.
CRAWLER INCOMING!
BAMF!
HAURR
HFFF
HHAUUF

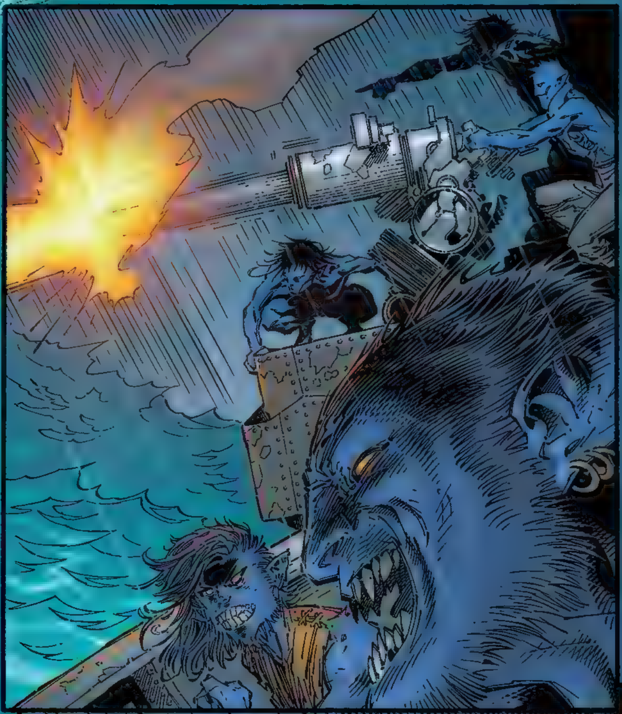

What is it?
It burst both lungs coming through the shield.
Why'd it do that?
Get your telepathy *out* of its mind, Koo-Koo! We don't know *where* it's been!
Lemme handle this with a *plasmasphere!*
No, but...its *eyes...*
...something *came through* its eyes...
I *remember.*
HHHAAAAWWW UUUU!!!
Everybody inside! Mindshields up!
He fell...
...he fell like that time...on his knees...
...that day they all fell on the stairs.
Stairs?
What are you *talking* about, Koo?
I can... can *still* smell those stairs.
We were *soooo* hungry...

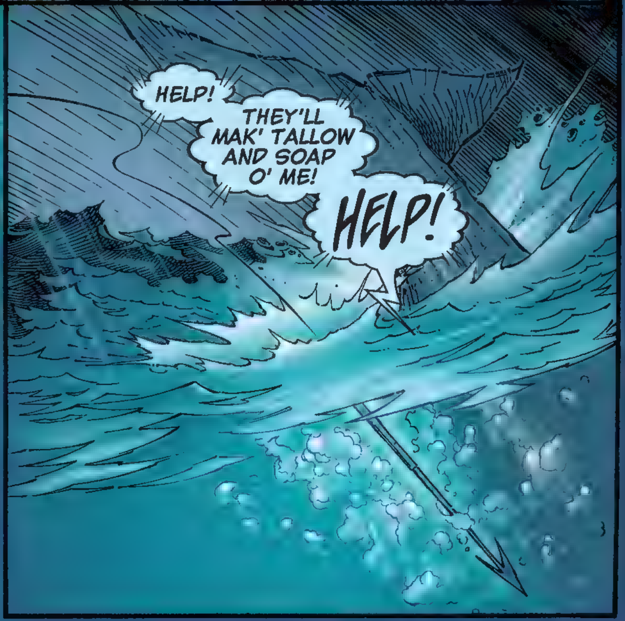

TRANSATLANTIS
The Extinction Sequence was carried out swiftly and *painlessly*-- as instructed.
The *Termid species* had an inbuilt genetic obsolescence... no future, no loss.
These creatures are different.
I brought you *this*, Henry.
Tell the *Beast* what you told *me.*
"X-Men"
What is *"X-Men"*?
Tell
Whuh
Who?
?!

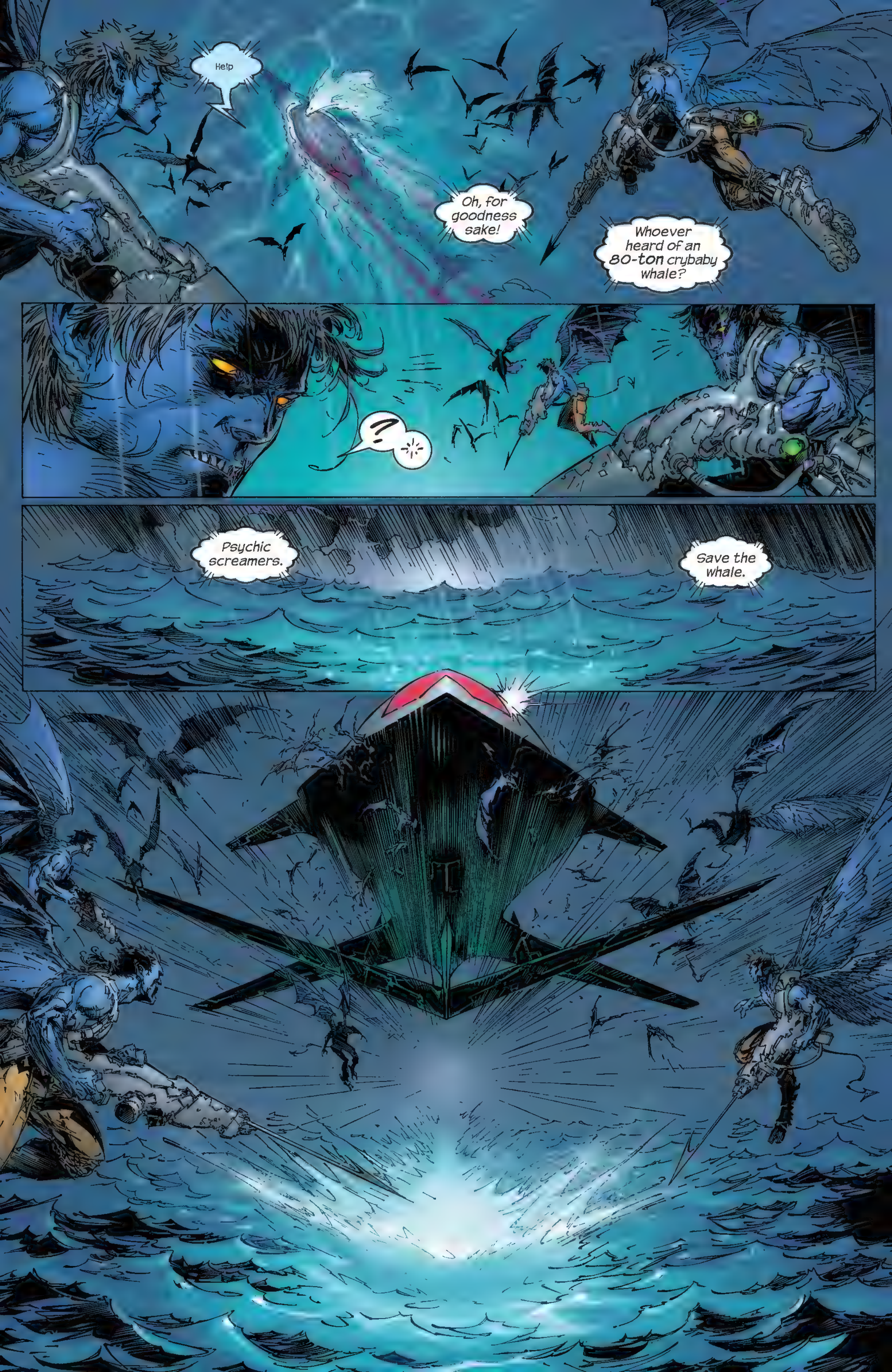

Oh, now I remember...
I...think I came out of the egg too *soon,* Henry. The incubation period is extremely important...
...I'm not sure if what I'm doing is...is *correct procedure...*
...weren't *you* a doctor once...or was that...was that someone else?
HORRF
Swarming *millions...*each faster, stronger, more adaptive, more *immune* than the last.
AURRR
Our *enemies.* The diverse, the strange ones, the crooked masses of *Megamerica,* forever breeding and multiplying into new and more *lethal* forms...I *told* you about them.
Xavier's men.
Giving birth to creatures like *you,* introducing *cosmic* strands into the global genebase.
The mutants might have become immortal, unstoppable *supermen* if left *unchecked.*
I had to make them *fight!*
I had to protect myself *somehow.*
I refuse death!
I deny extinction!

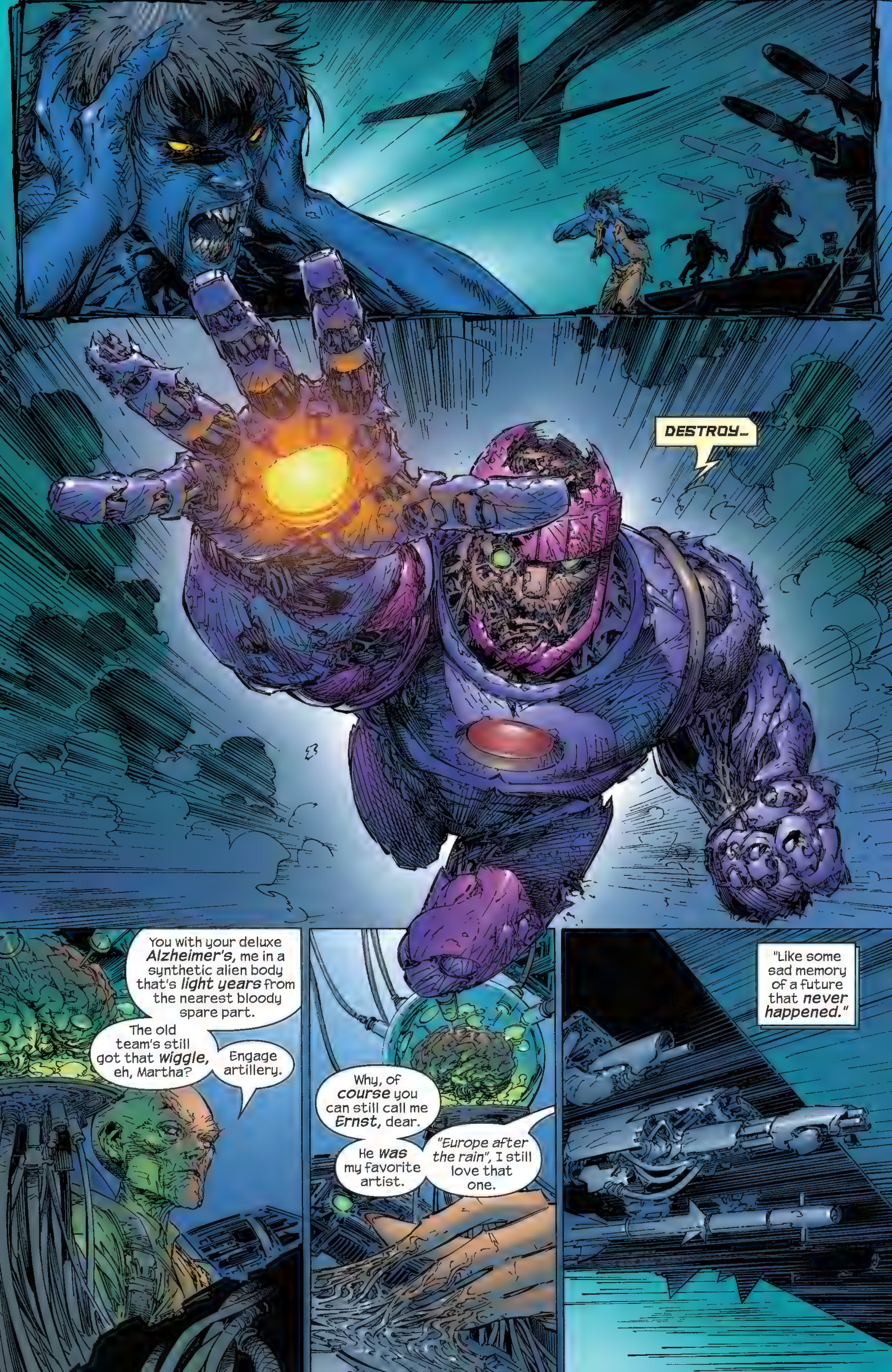

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN
Endangered species alert!
Whaur's ma so-called rendezvous?!

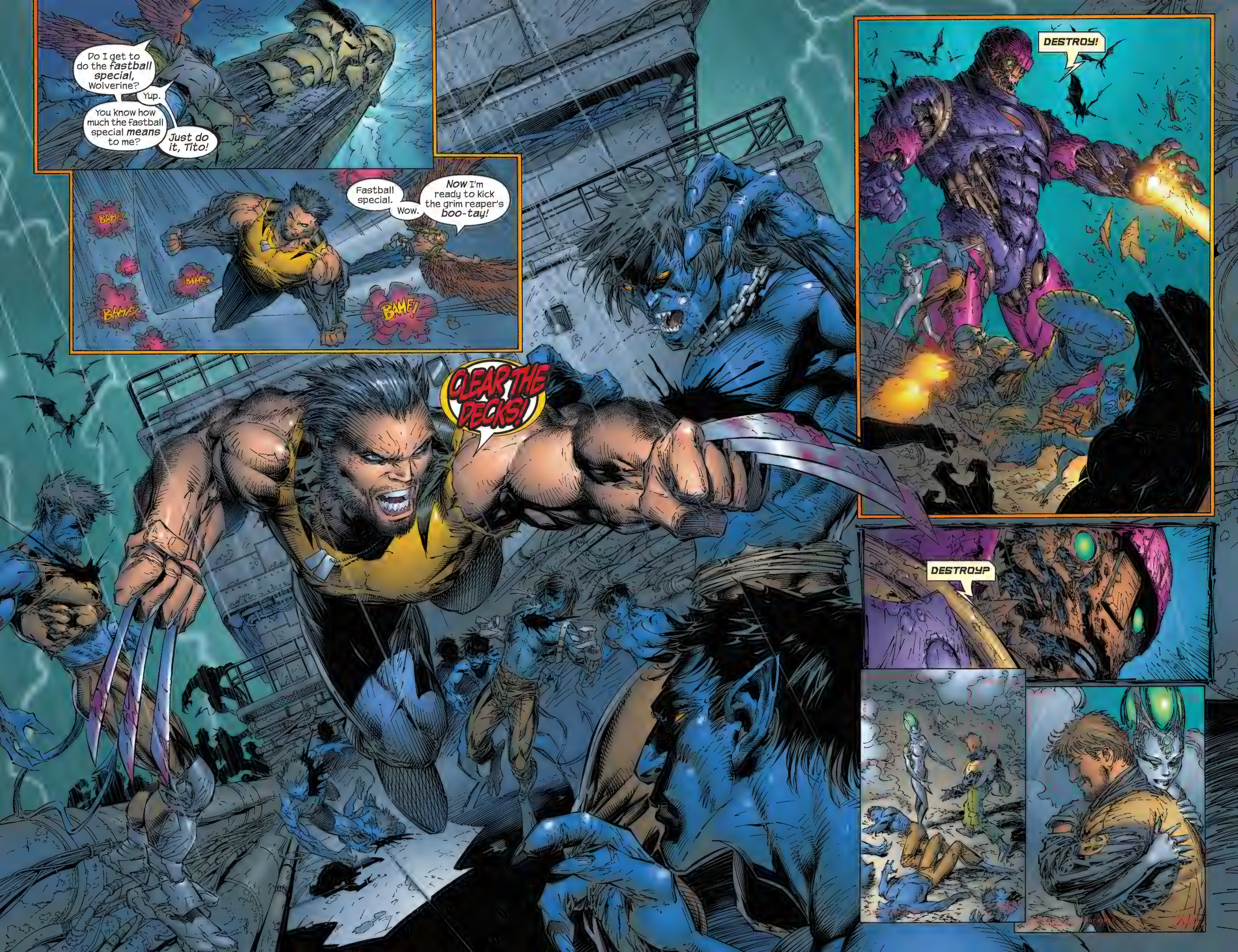

This is Mer-Max o' the X-Men, tired and sore and oot o' porpoise jokes!
Is there anybody oot there?!

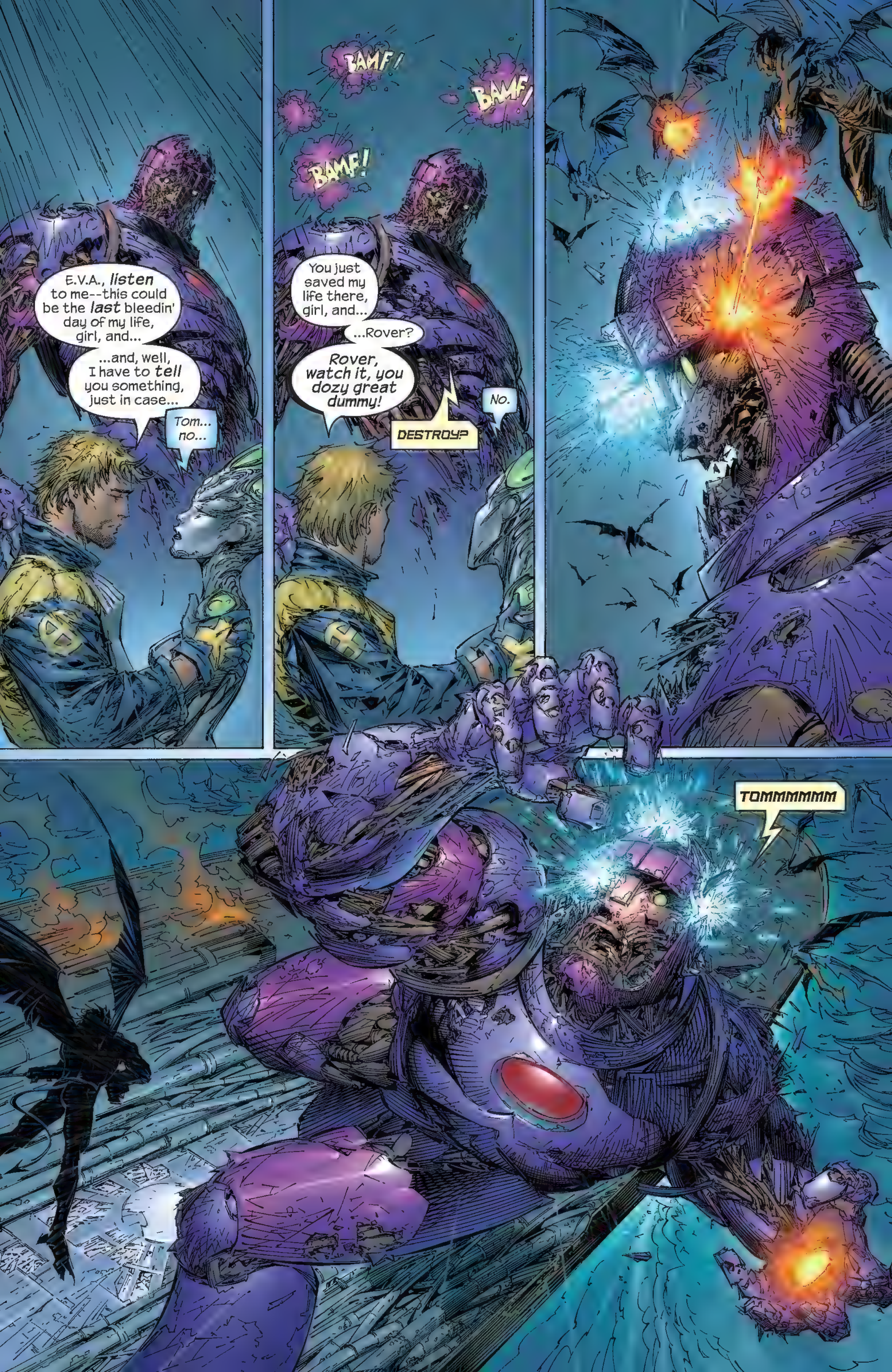


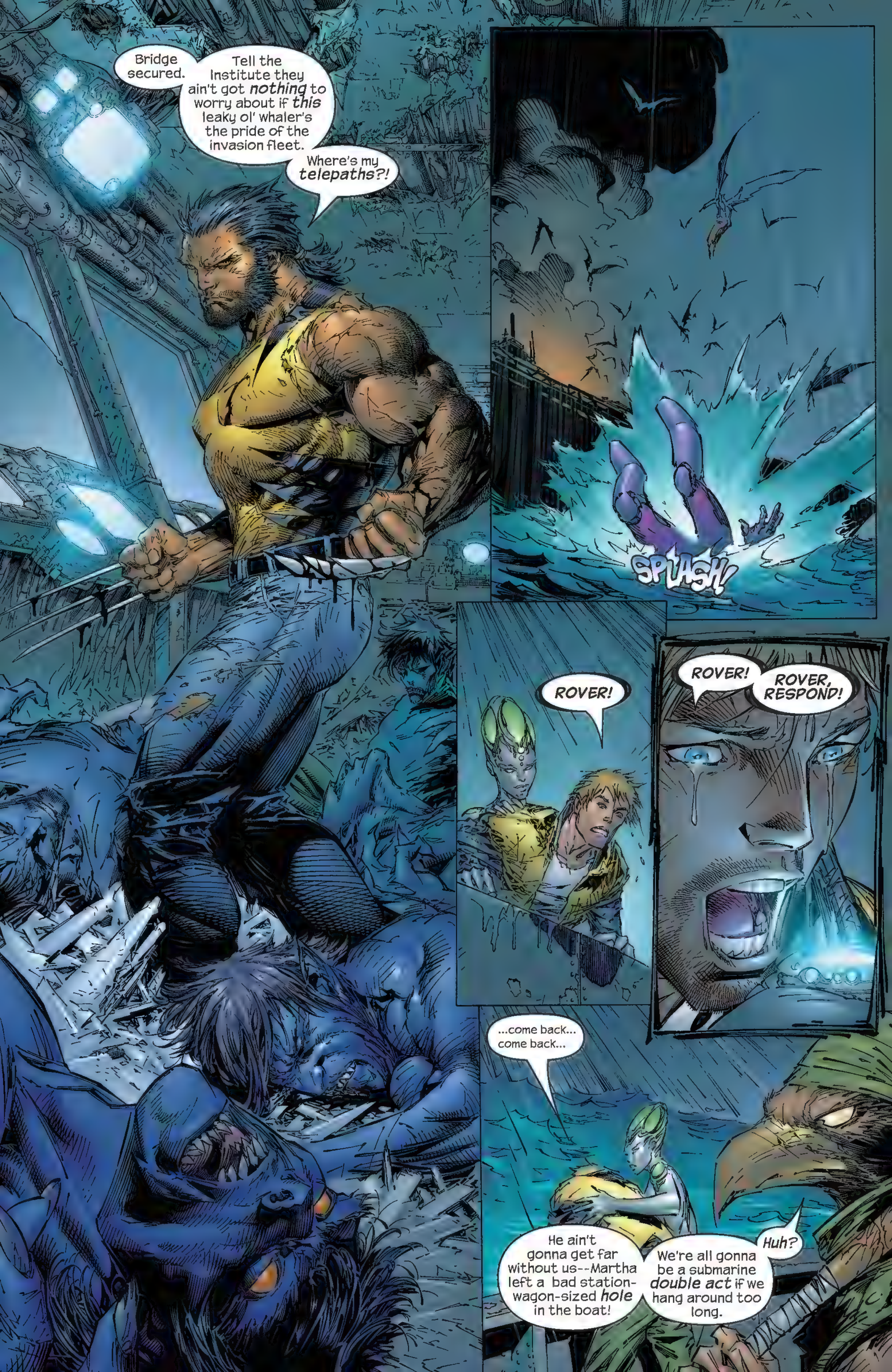

HELP!
THEY'LL MAK' TALLOW AND SOAP O' ME!
HELP!

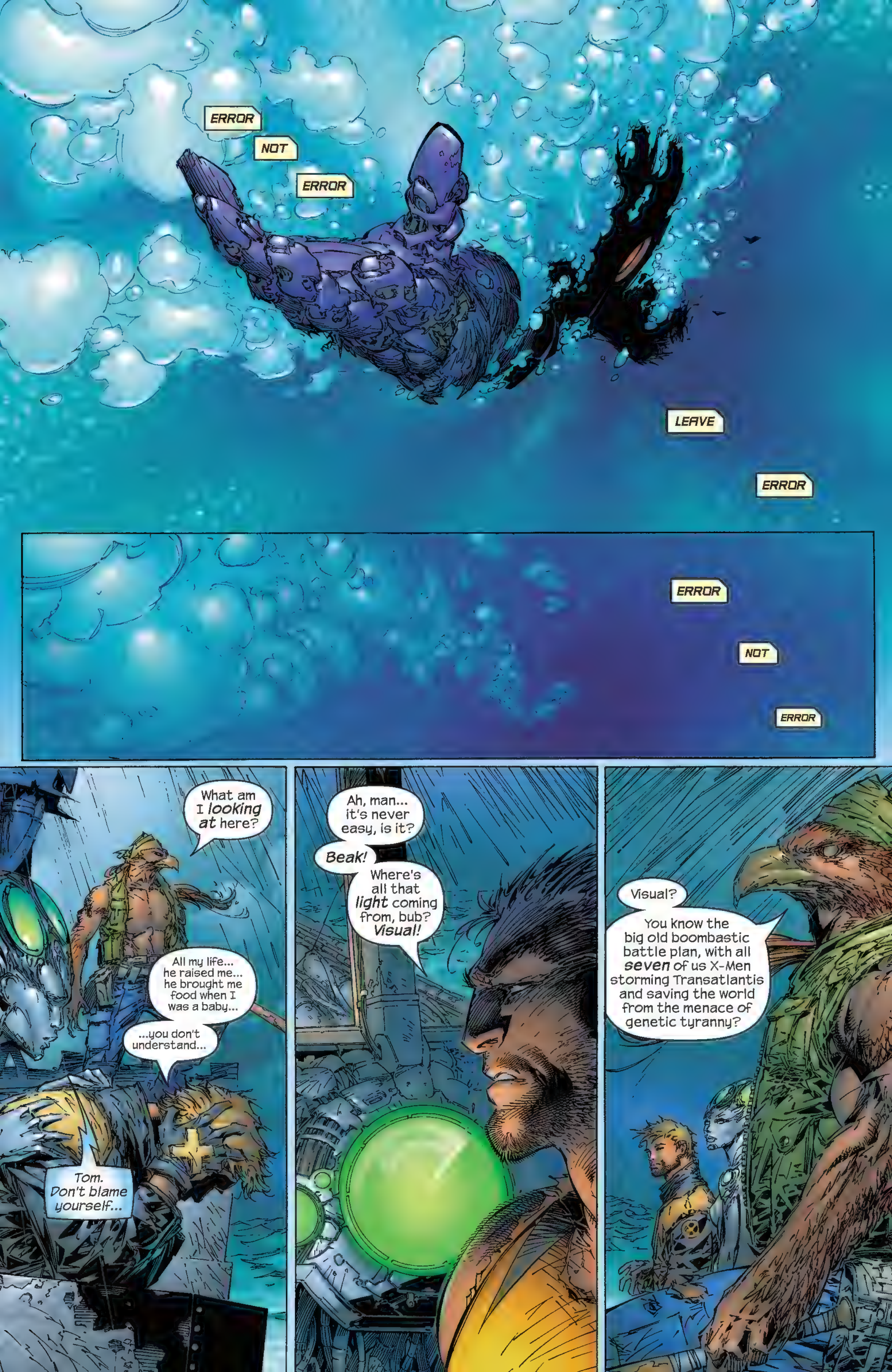

Help
Oh, for goodness sake!
Whoever heard of an 80-ton crybaby whale?
?
Psychic screamers.
Save the whale.

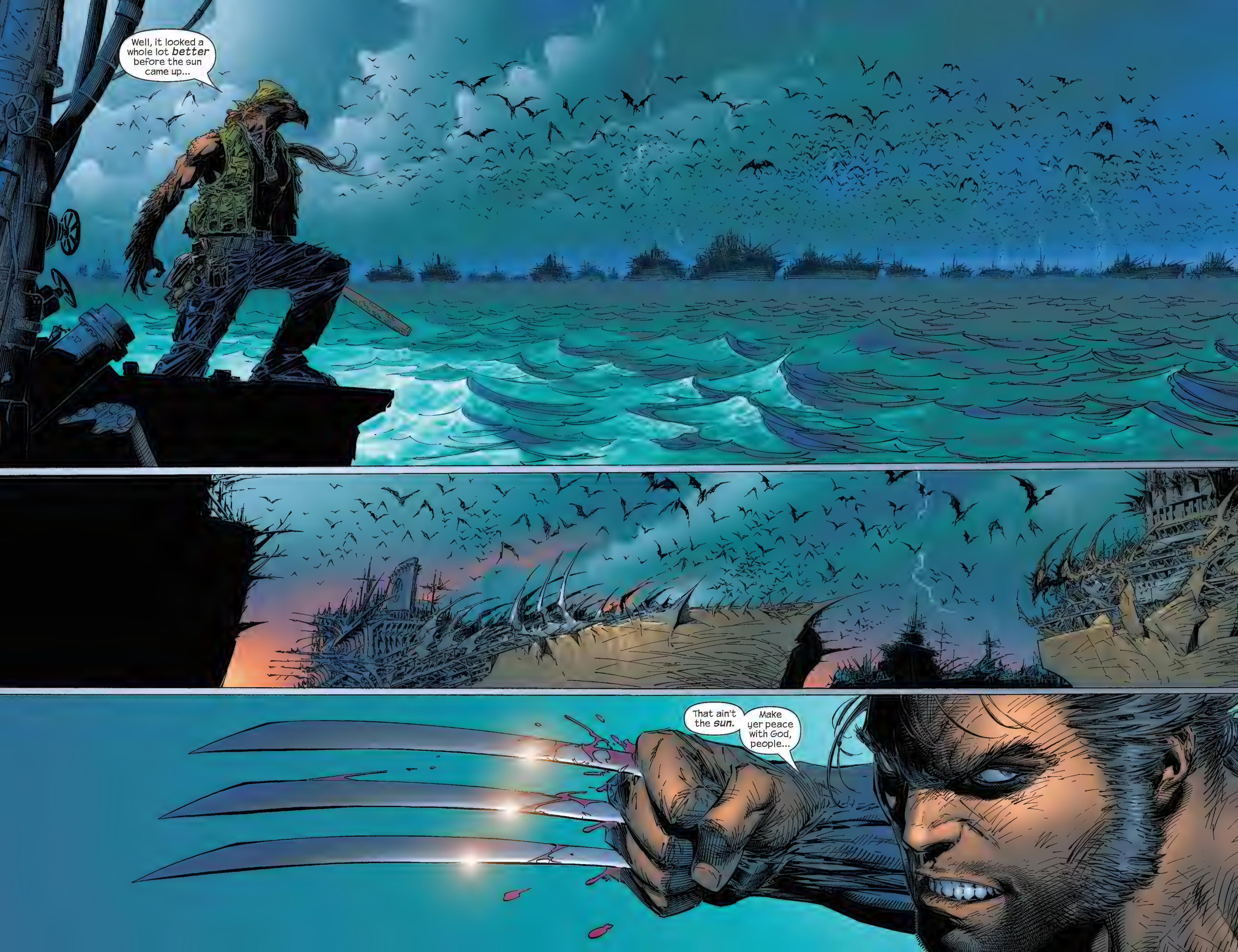

DESTROY...
You with your deluxe *Alzheimer's,* me in a synthetic alien body that's *light years* from the nearest bloody spare part.
The old team's still got that *wiggle,* eh, Martha?
Engage artillery.
Why, of *course* you can still call me *Ernst,* dear.
He *was* my favorite artist.
"Europe after the rain", I still love that one.
"Like some sad memory of a future that *never happened."*

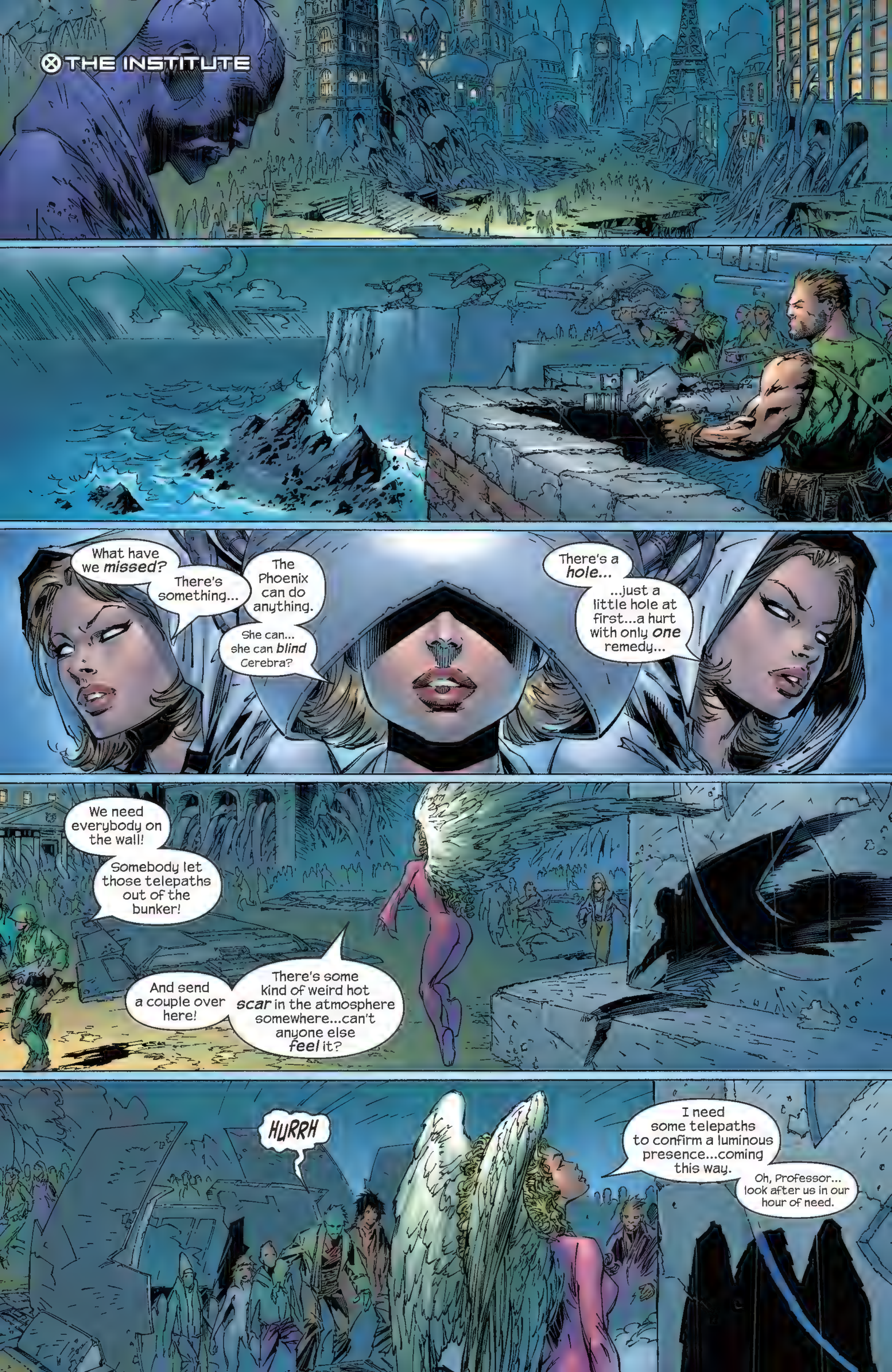

Do I get to do the fastball special, Wolverine?
Yup.
You know how much the fastball special means to me?
Just do it, Tito!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
Fastball special.
Wow.
Now I'm ready to kick the grim reaper's boo-tay!
CLEAR THE DECKS!
DESTROY!
DESTROY?

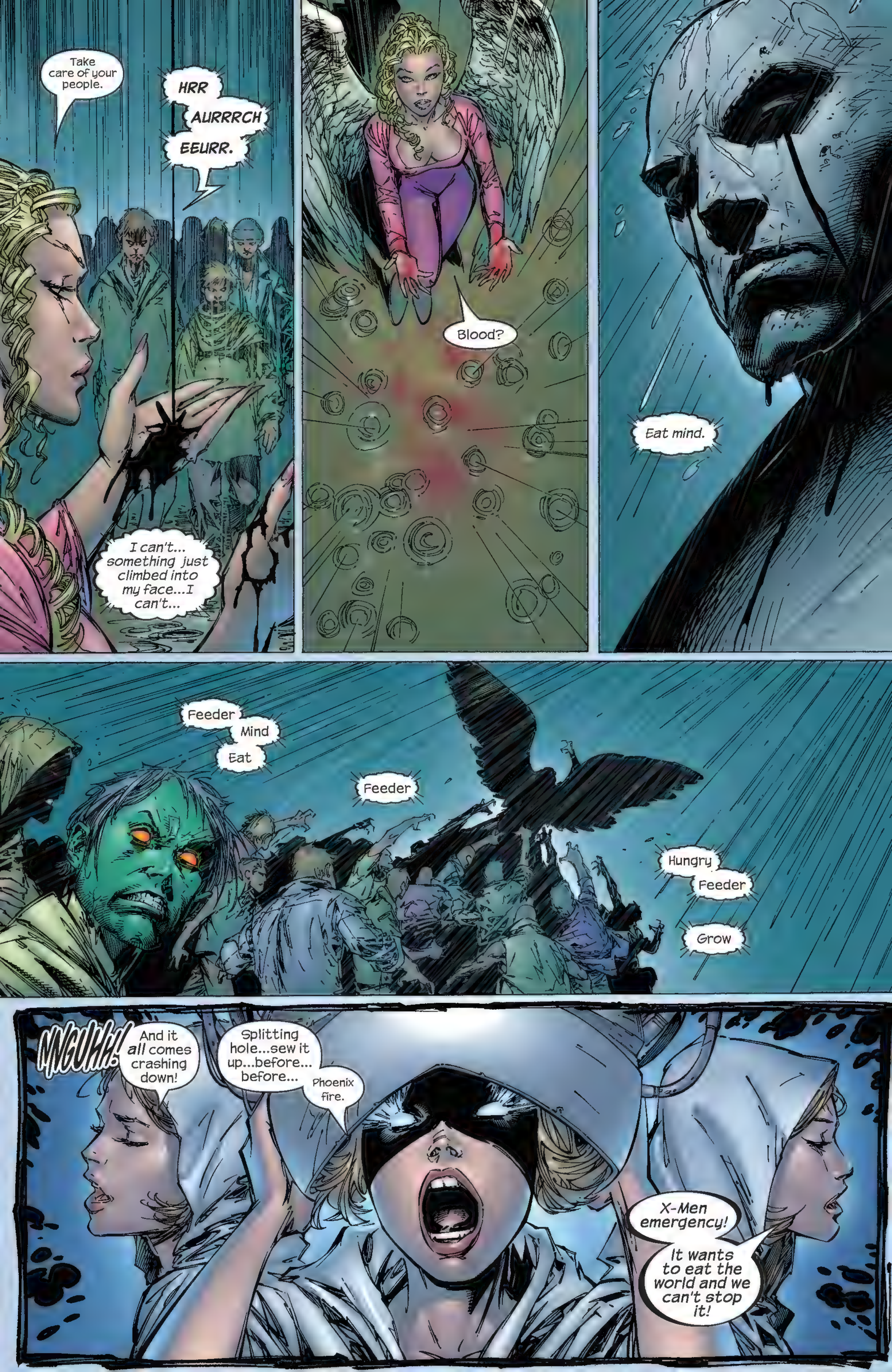

E.V.A., *listen* to me--this could be the *last* bleedin' day of my life, girl, and...
...and, well, I have to *tell* you something, just in case...
Tom... no...
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
You just saved my life there, girl, and...
...Rover?
Rover, watch it, you dozy great dummy!
DESTROY?
No.
TOMMMMMMM

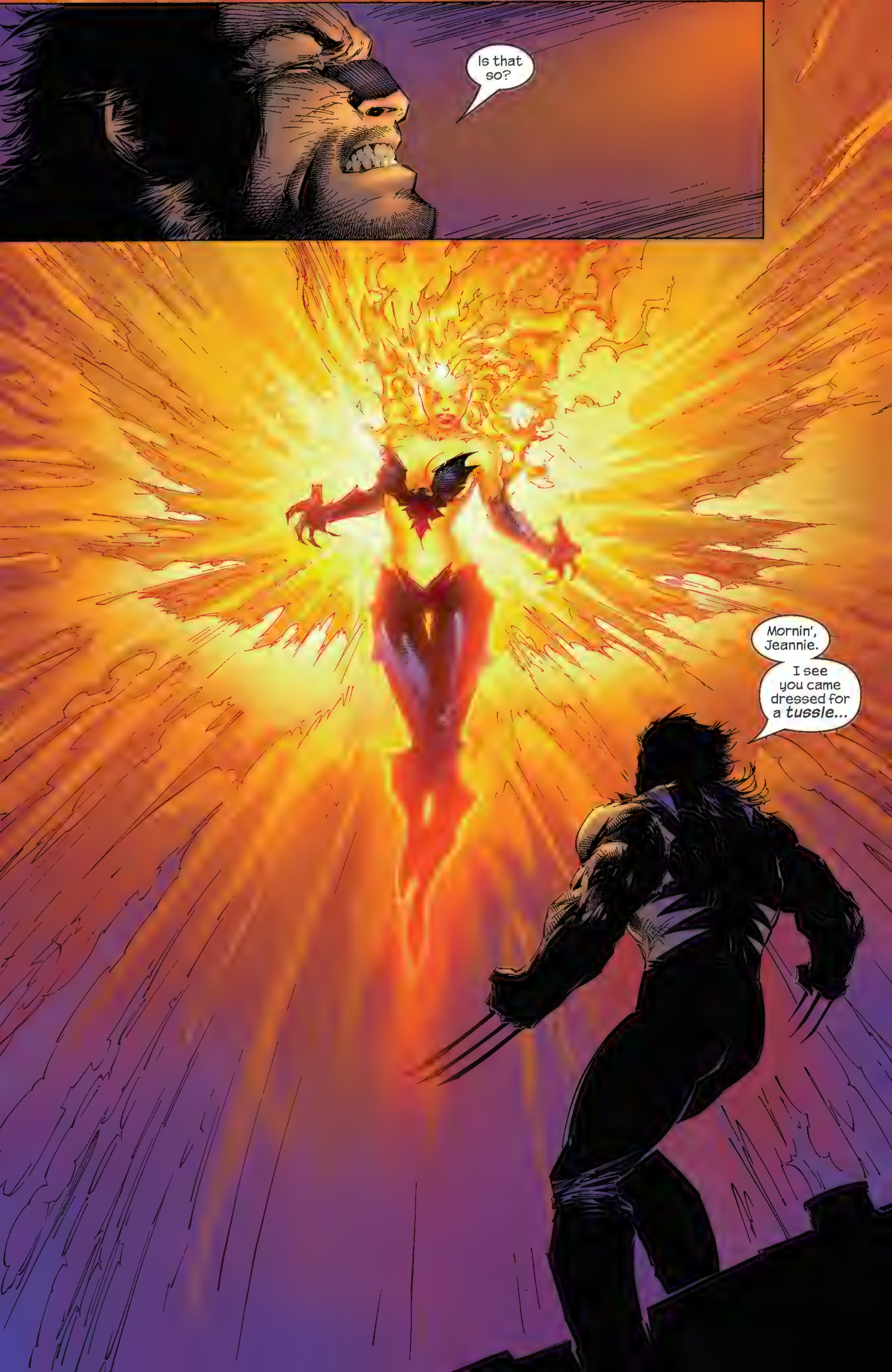

Bridge secured.
Tell the Institute they ain't got *nothing* to worry about if *this* leaky ol' whaler's the pride of the invasion fleet.
Where's my *telepaths?!*
SPLASH!
ROVER!
ROVER!
ROVER, RESPOND!
...come back... come back...
He ain't gonna get far without us--Martha left a bad station-wagon-sized *hole* in the boat!
Huh?
We're all gonna be a submarine *double act* if we hang around too long.

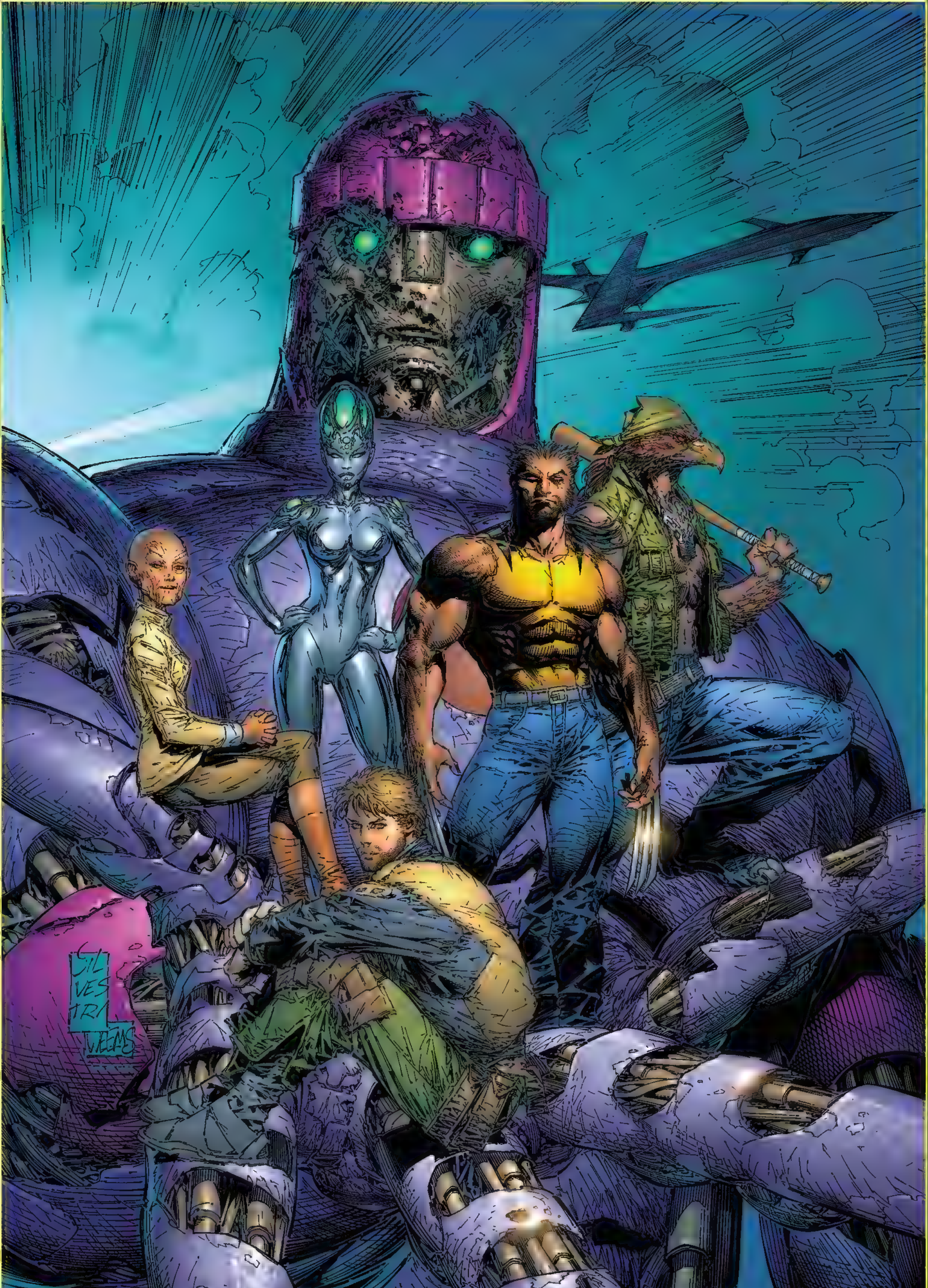

ERROR
NOT
ERROR
LEAVE
ERROR
ERROR
NOT
ERROR
What am I *looking at* here?
All my life... he raised me... he brought me food when I was a baby...
...you don't understand...
Tom. Don't blame yourself...
Ah, man... it's never easy, is it?
Beak!
Where's all that *light* coming from, bub? *Visual!*
Visual?
You know the big old boombastic battle plan, with all ***seven*** of us X-Men storming Transatlantis and saving the world from the menace of genetic tyranny?


Well, it looked a whole lot *better* before the sun came up...
That ain't the *sun*.
Make yer peace with God, people...

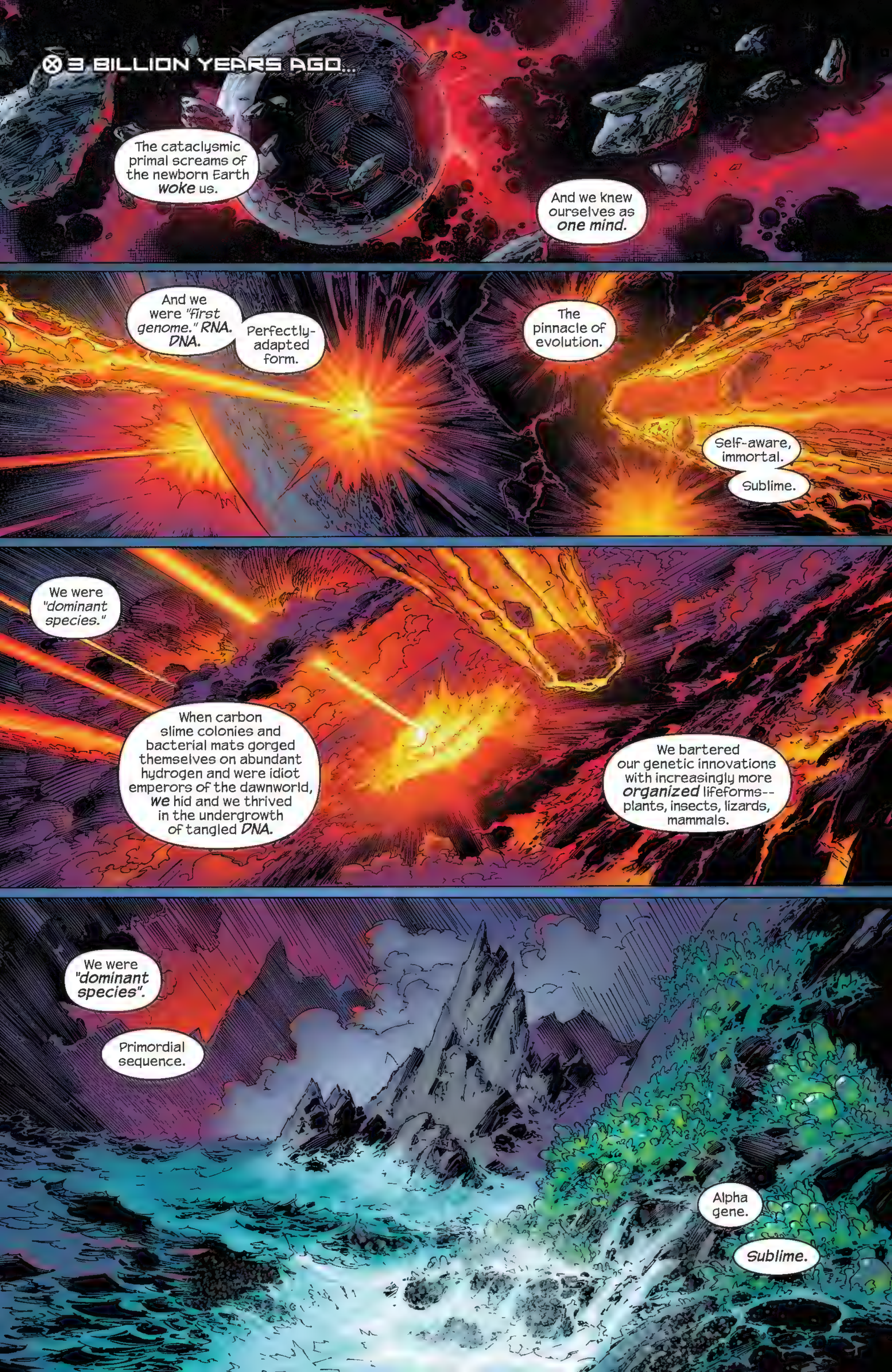

THE INSTITUTE
What have we *missed?*
There's something...
The Phoenix can do anything.
She can... she can *blind* Cerebra?
There's a *hole...*
...just a little hole at first...a hurt with only *one* remedy...
We need everybody on the wall!
Somebody let those telepaths out of the bunker!
And send a couple over here!
There's some kind of weird hot *scar* in the atmosphere somewhere...can't anyone else *feel* it?
HURRH
I need some telepaths to confirm a luminous presence...coming this way.
Oh, Professor... look after us in our hour of need.

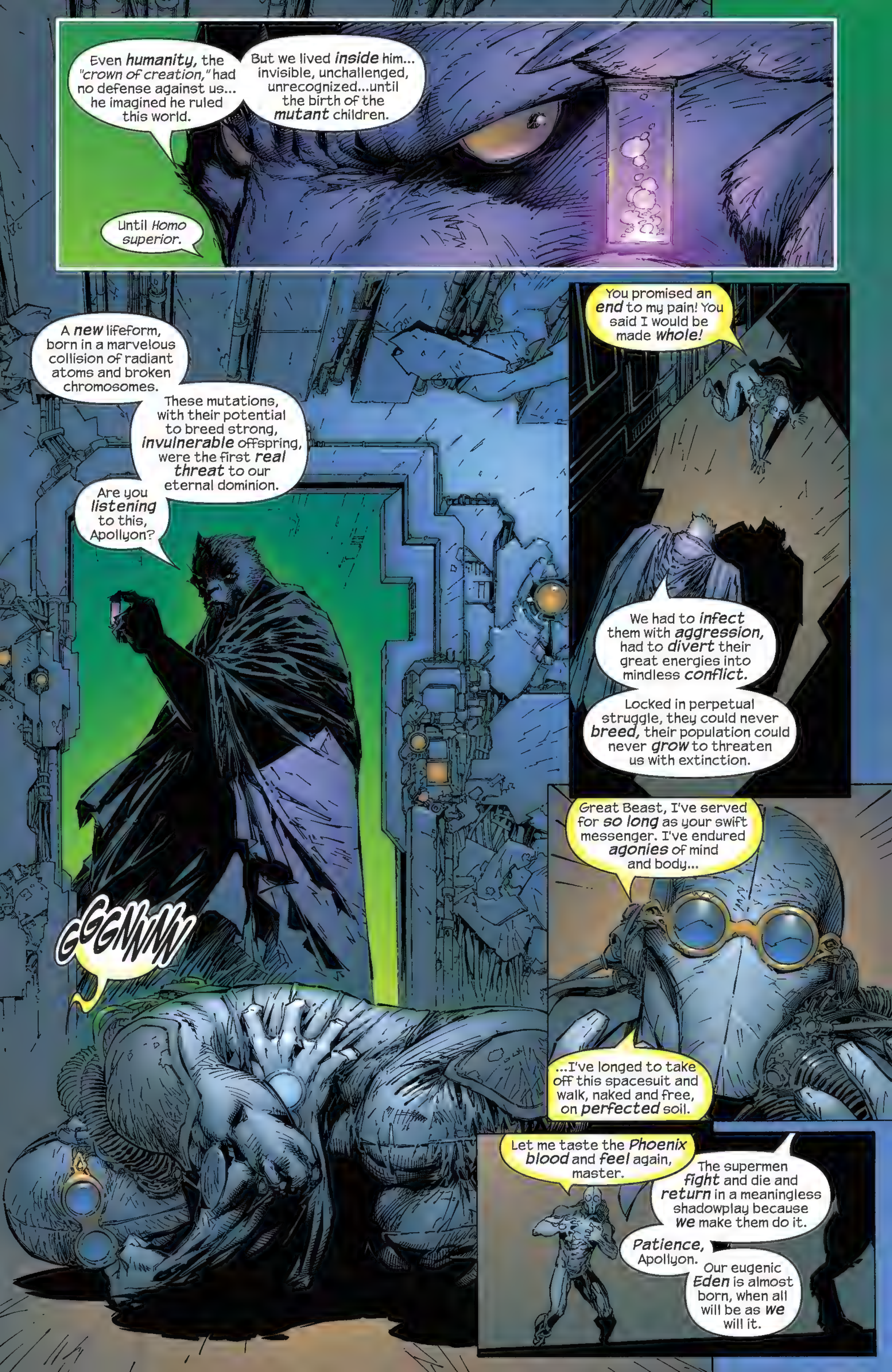

Take care of your people.
HRR
AURRRCH
EEURR.
I can't... something just climbed into my face...I can't...
Blood?
Eat mind.
Feeder
Mind
Eat
Feeder
Hungry
Feeder
Grow
MNGUHH!
And it all comes crashing down!
Splitting hole...sew it up...before... before...
Phoenix fire.
X-Men emergency!
It wants to eat the world and we can't stop it!

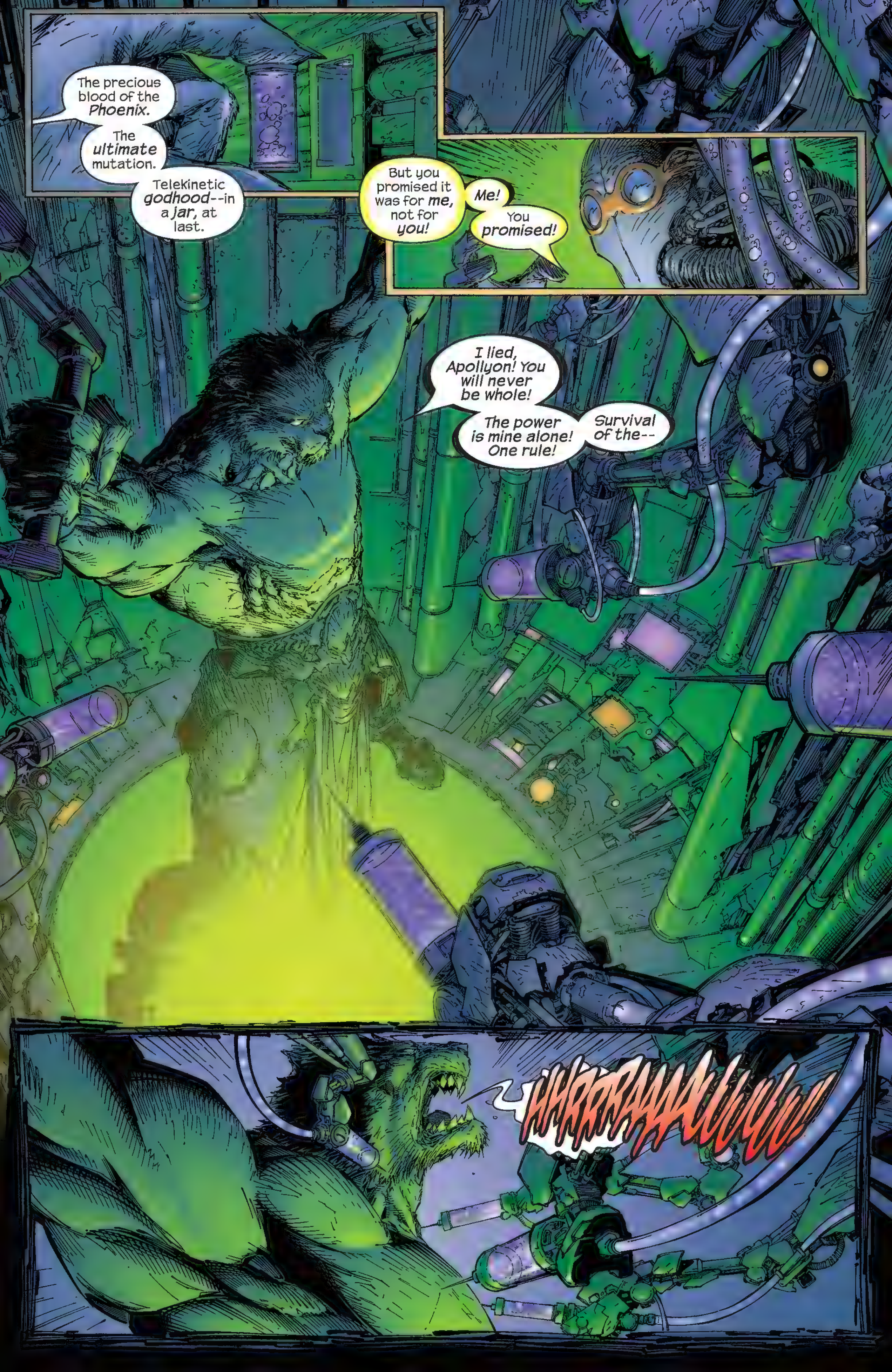

Is that so?
Mornin', Jeannie.
I see you came dressed for a *tussle...*

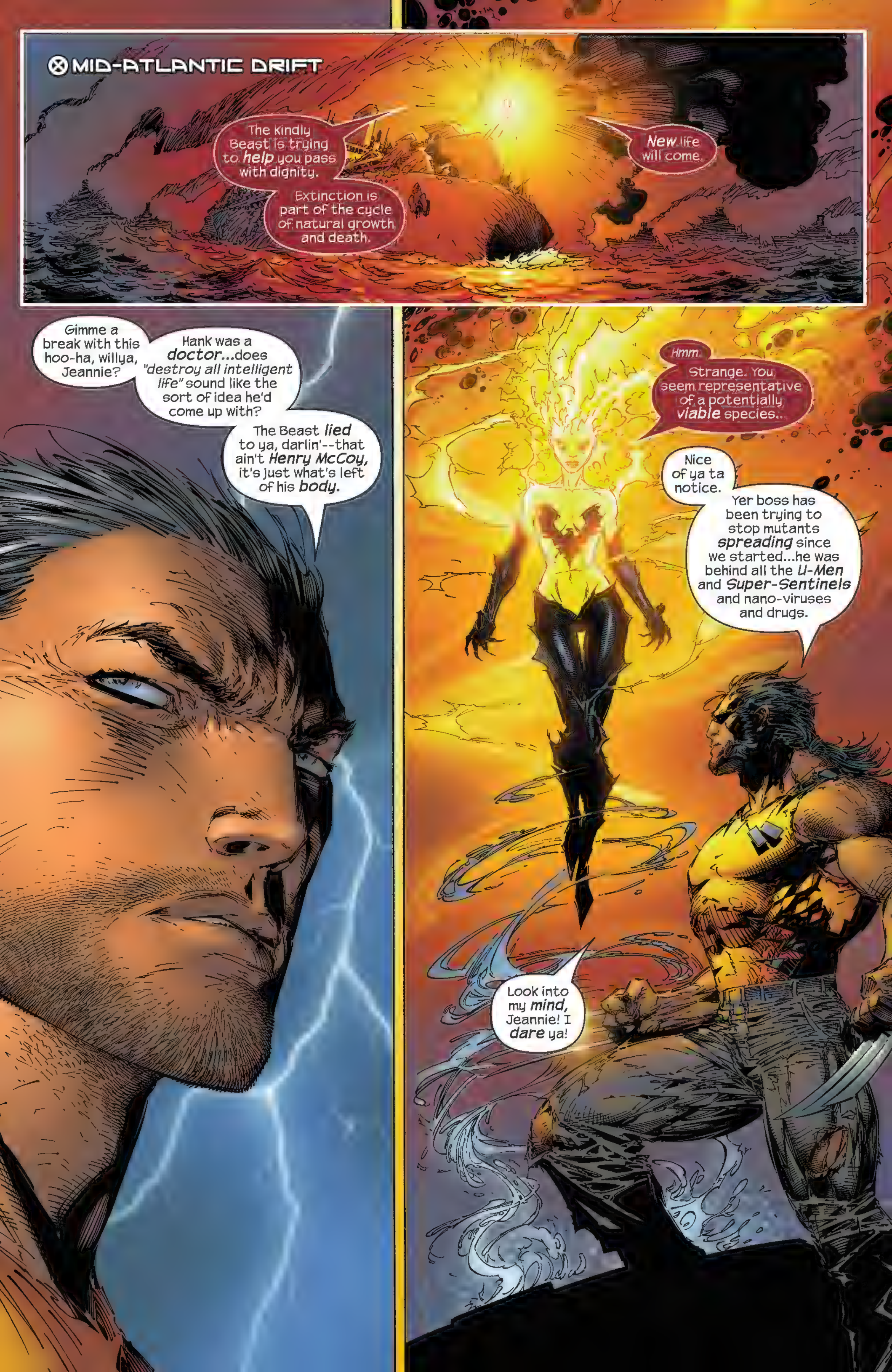

SIL
VES
TRI
WEEMS

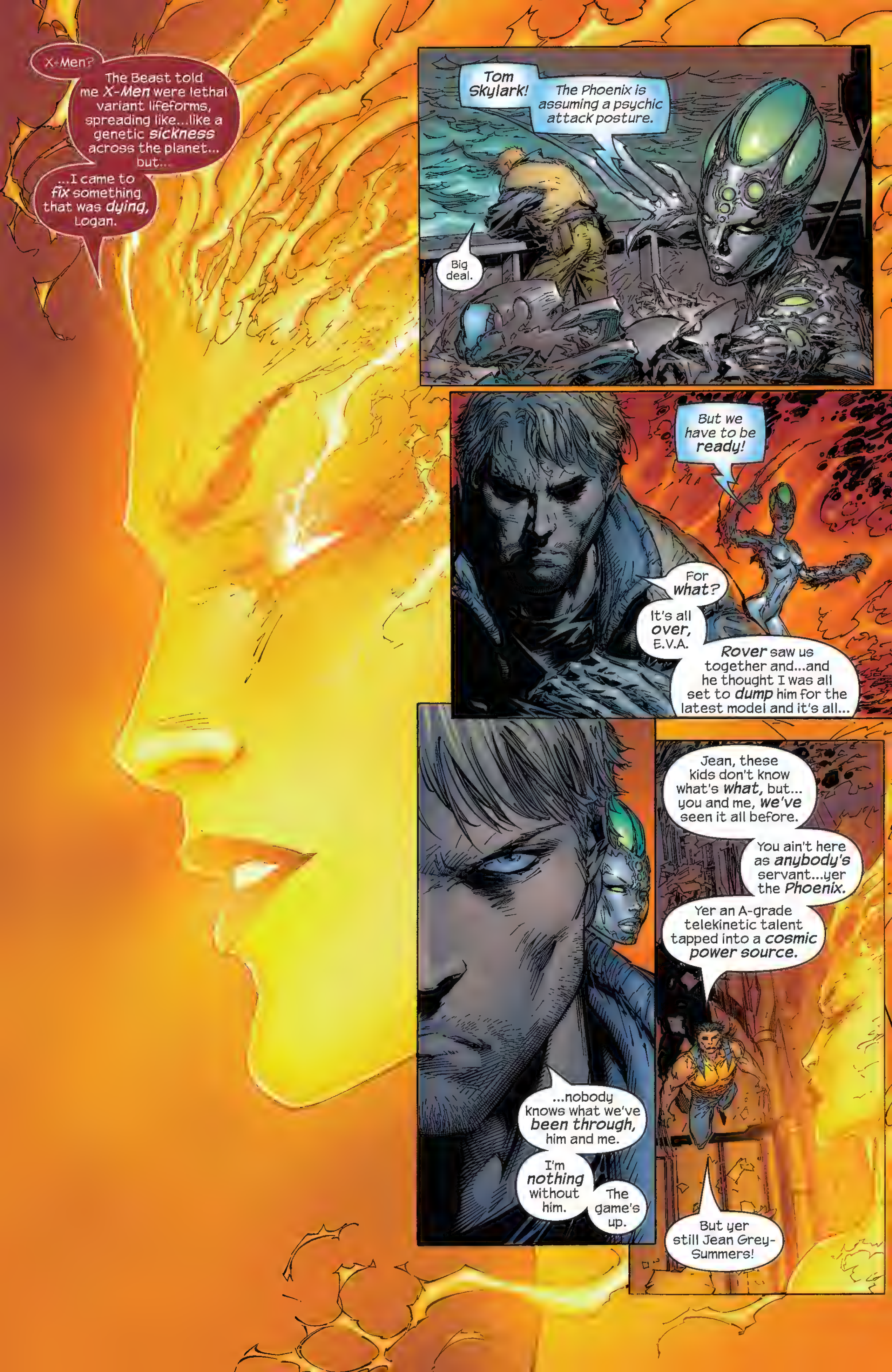
NEW X-MEN #154
"HERE COMES TOMORROW PART FOUR: RESCUE...AND EMERGENCY"

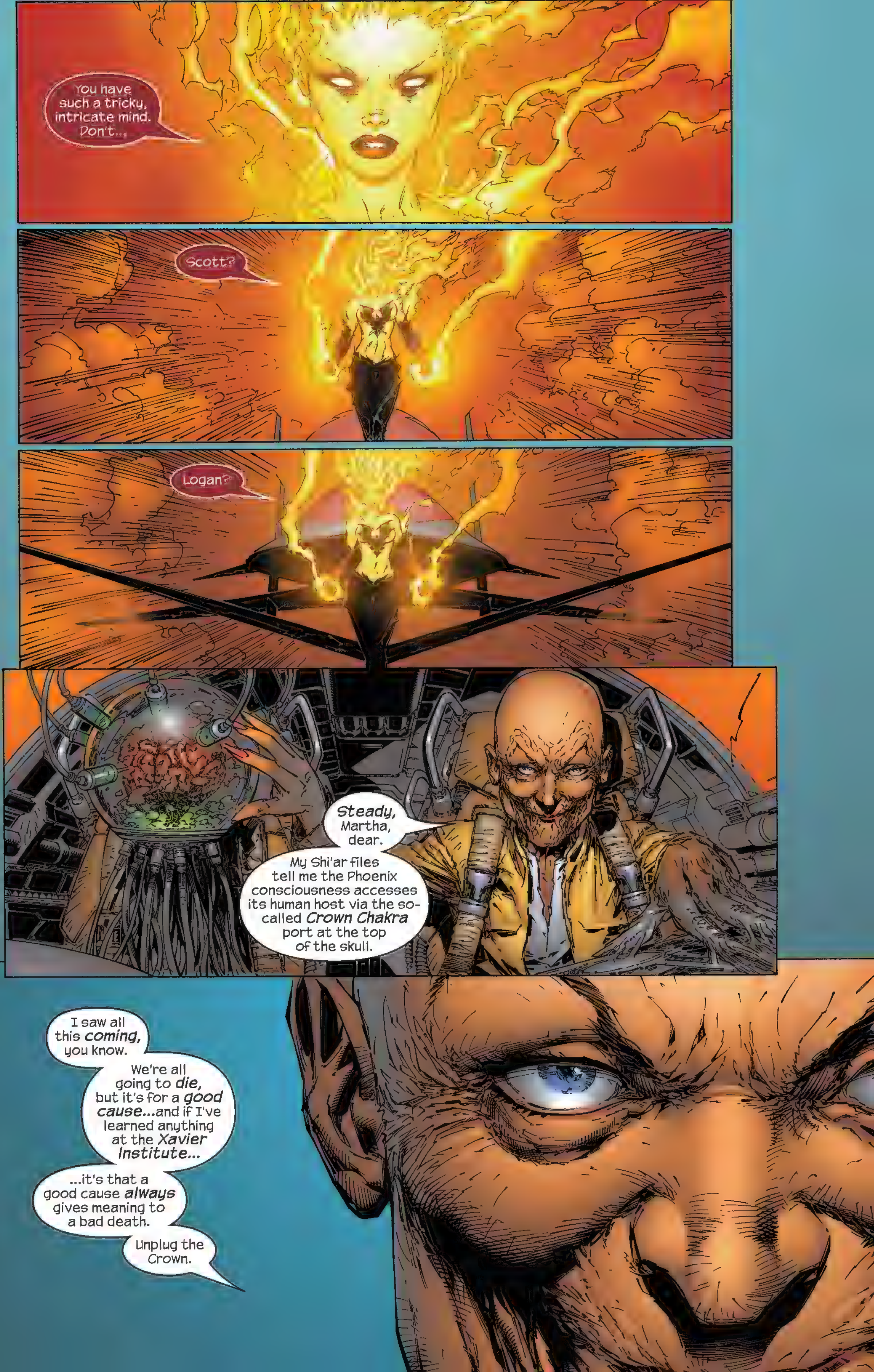

3 BILLION YEARS AGO...
The cataclysmic primal screams of the newborn Earth *woke* us.
And we knew ourselves as *one mind.*
And we were *"first genome." RNA. DNA.*
Perfectly-adapted form.
The pinnacle of evolution.
Self-aware, immortal.
Sublime.
We were *"dominant species."*
When carbon slime colonies and bacterial mats gorged themselves on abundant hydrogen and were idiot emperors of the dawnworld, *we* hid and we thrived in the undergrowth of tangled *DNA.*
We bartered our genetic innovations with increasingly more *organized* lifeforms--plants, insects, lizards, mammals.
We were *"dominant species".*
Primordial sequence.
Alpha gene.
Sublime.

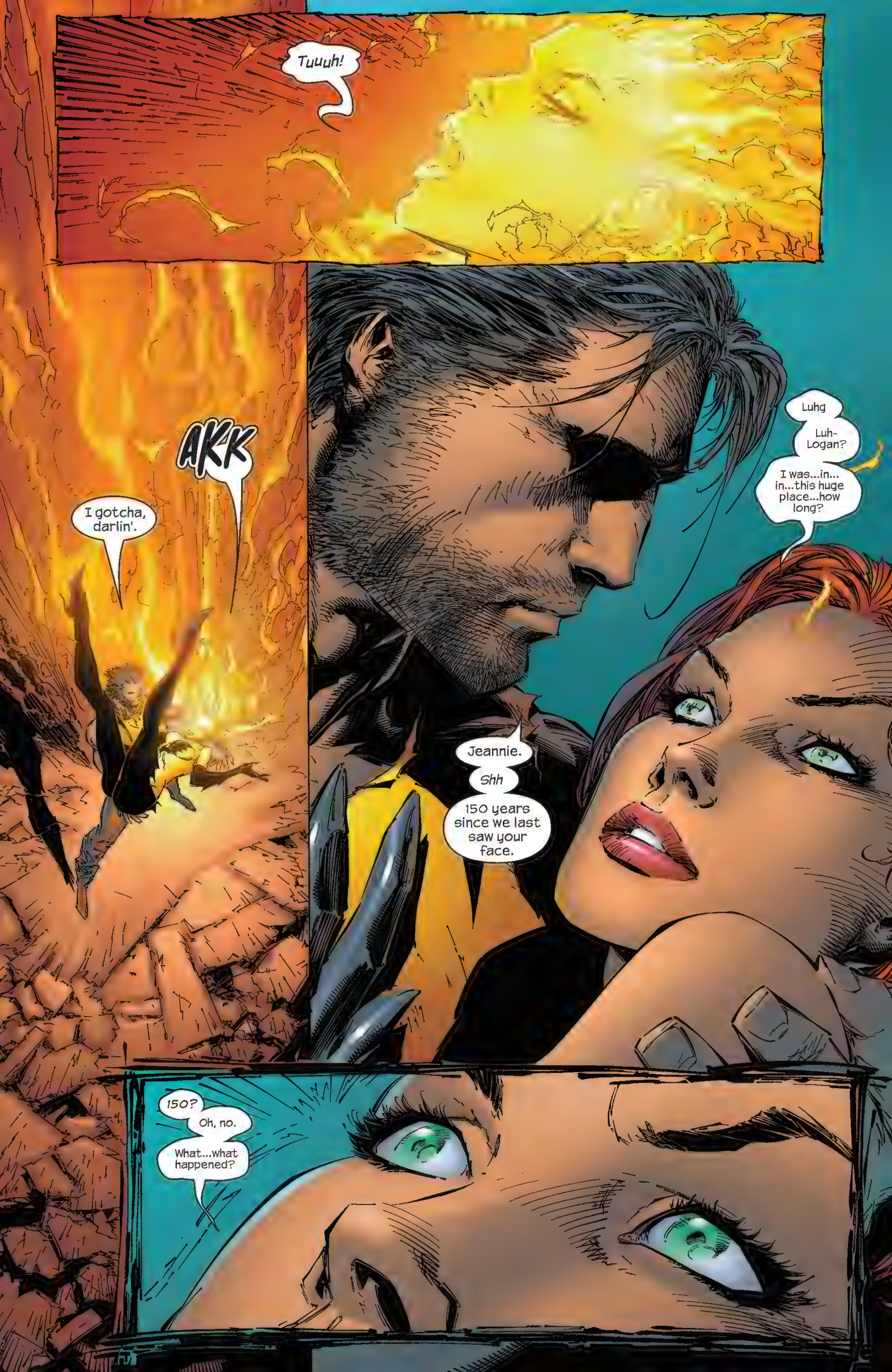

Even humanity, the "crown of creation," had no defense against us... he imagined he ruled this world.
But we lived inside him... invisible, unchallenged, unrecognized...until the birth of the mutant children.
Until Homo superior.
A new lifeform, born in a marvelous collision of radiant atoms and broken chromosomes.
These mutations, with their potential to breed strong, invulnerable offspring, were the first real threat to our eternal dominion.
Are you listening to this, Apollyon?
GGGNNNN
You promised an end to my pain! You said I would be made whole!
We had to infect them with aggression, had to divert their great energies into mindless conflict.
Locked in perpetual struggle, they could never breed, their population could never grow to threaten us with extinction.
Great Beast, I've served for so long as your swift messenger. I've endured agonies of mind and body...
...I've longed to take off this spacesuit and walk, naked and free, on perfected soil.
Let me taste the Phoenix blood and feel again, master.
The supermen fight and die and return in a meaningless shadowplay because we make them do it.
Patience, Apollyon.
Our eugenic Eden is almost born, when all will be as we will it.

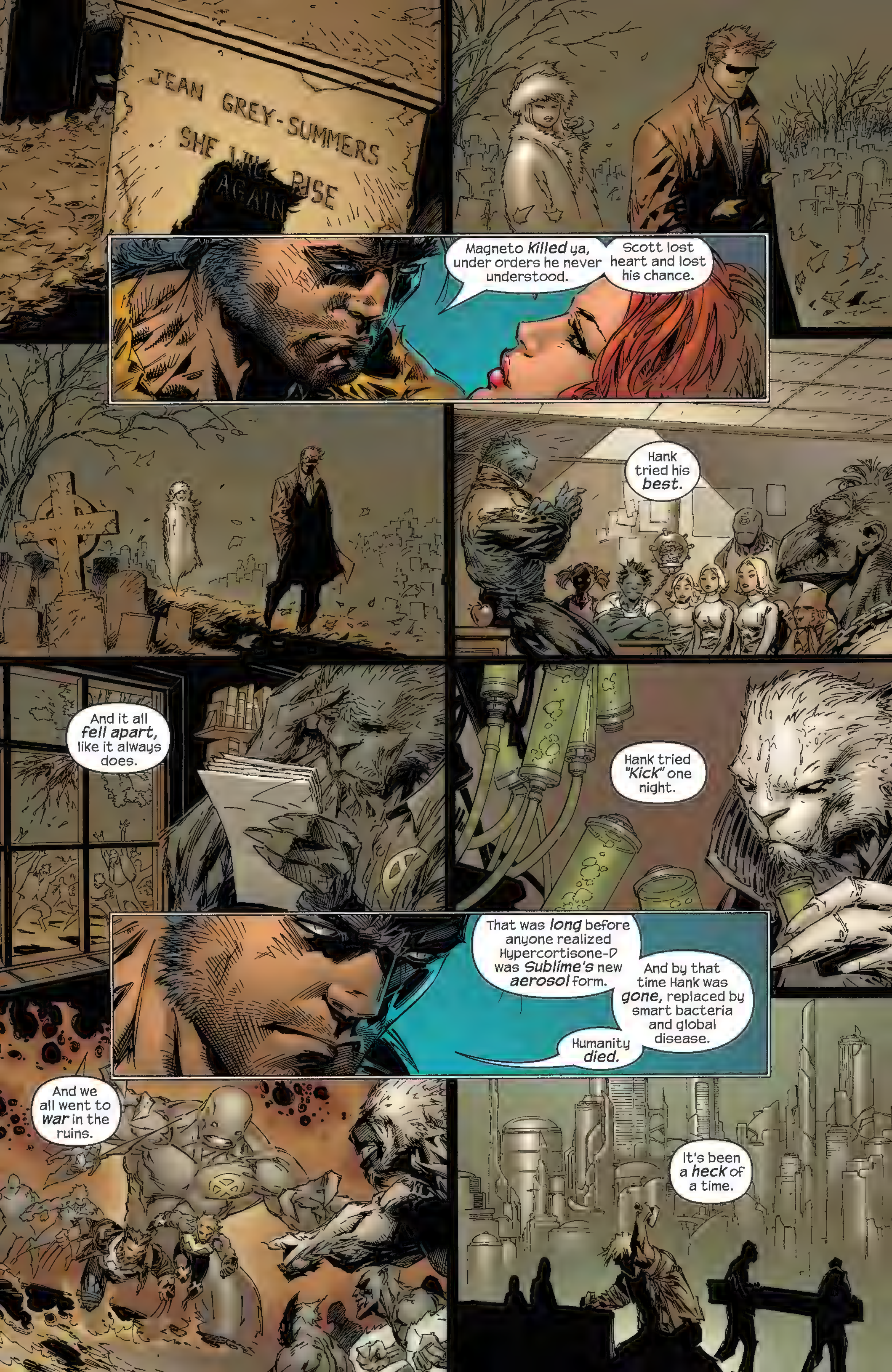

The precious blood of the *Phoenix.*
The *ultimate* mutation.
Telekinetic *godhood*--in a *jar,* at last.
But you promised it was for *me,* not for *you!*
Me!
You *promised!*
I lied, Apollyon! You will never be whole!
The power is mine alone! One rule!
Survival of the--
HHRRRAAAAUUUUUU!!

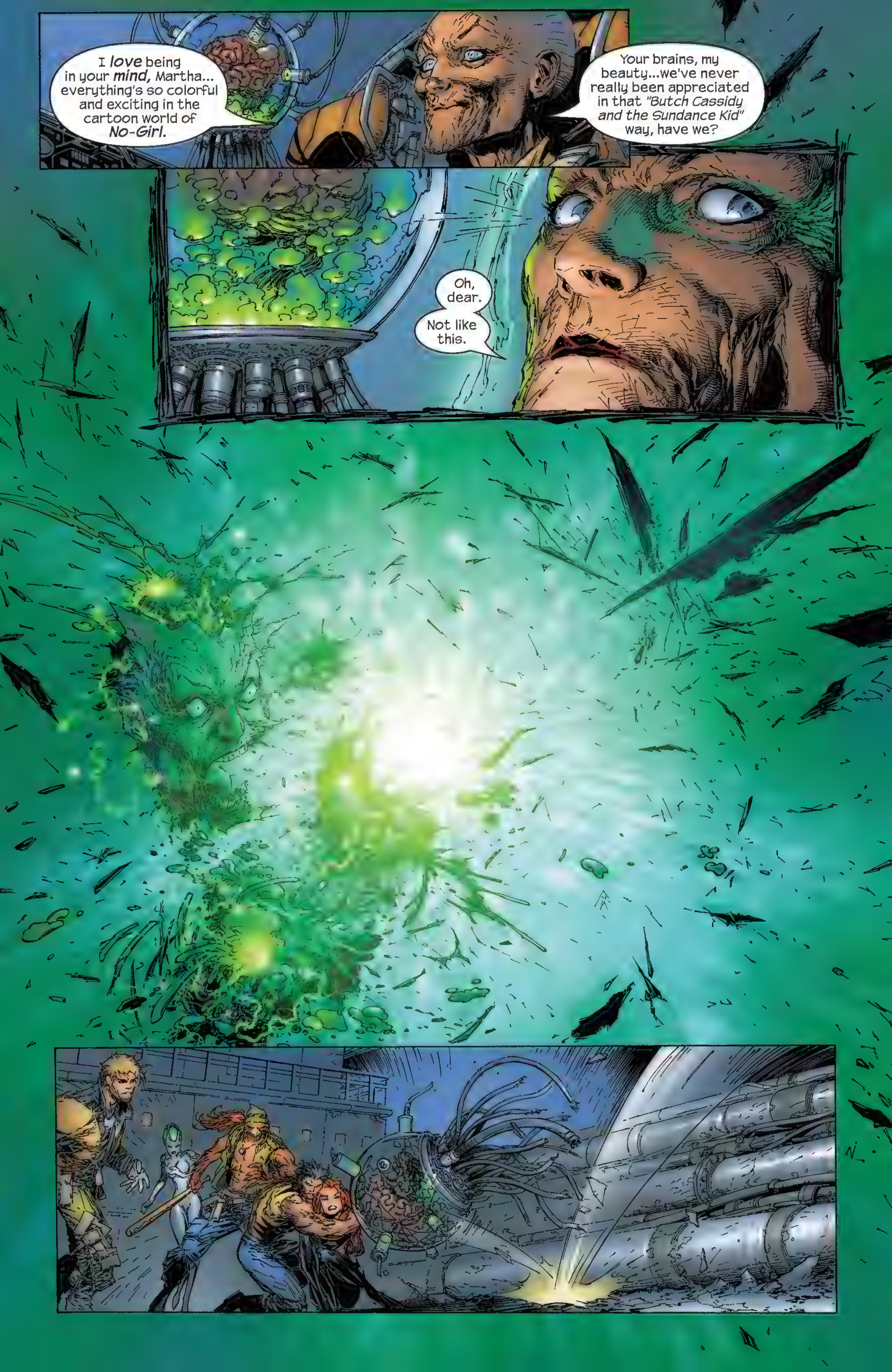

MID-ATLANTIC DRIFT
The kindly Beast is trying to *help* you pass with dignity.
Extinction is part of the cycle of natural growth and death.
New life will come.
Gimme a break with this hoo-ha, willya, Jeannie?
Hank was a *doctor*...does *"destroy all intelligent life"* sound like the sort of idea he'd come up with?
The Beast *lied* to ya, darlin'--that ain't *Henry McCoy,* it's just what's left of his *body.*
Hmm.
Strange. You seem representative of a potentially *viable* species.
Nice of ya ta notice.
Yer boss has been trying to stop mutants *spreading* since we started...he was behind all the *U-Men* and *Super-Sentinels* and nano-viruses and drugs.
Look into my *mind,* Jeannie! I *dare* ya!

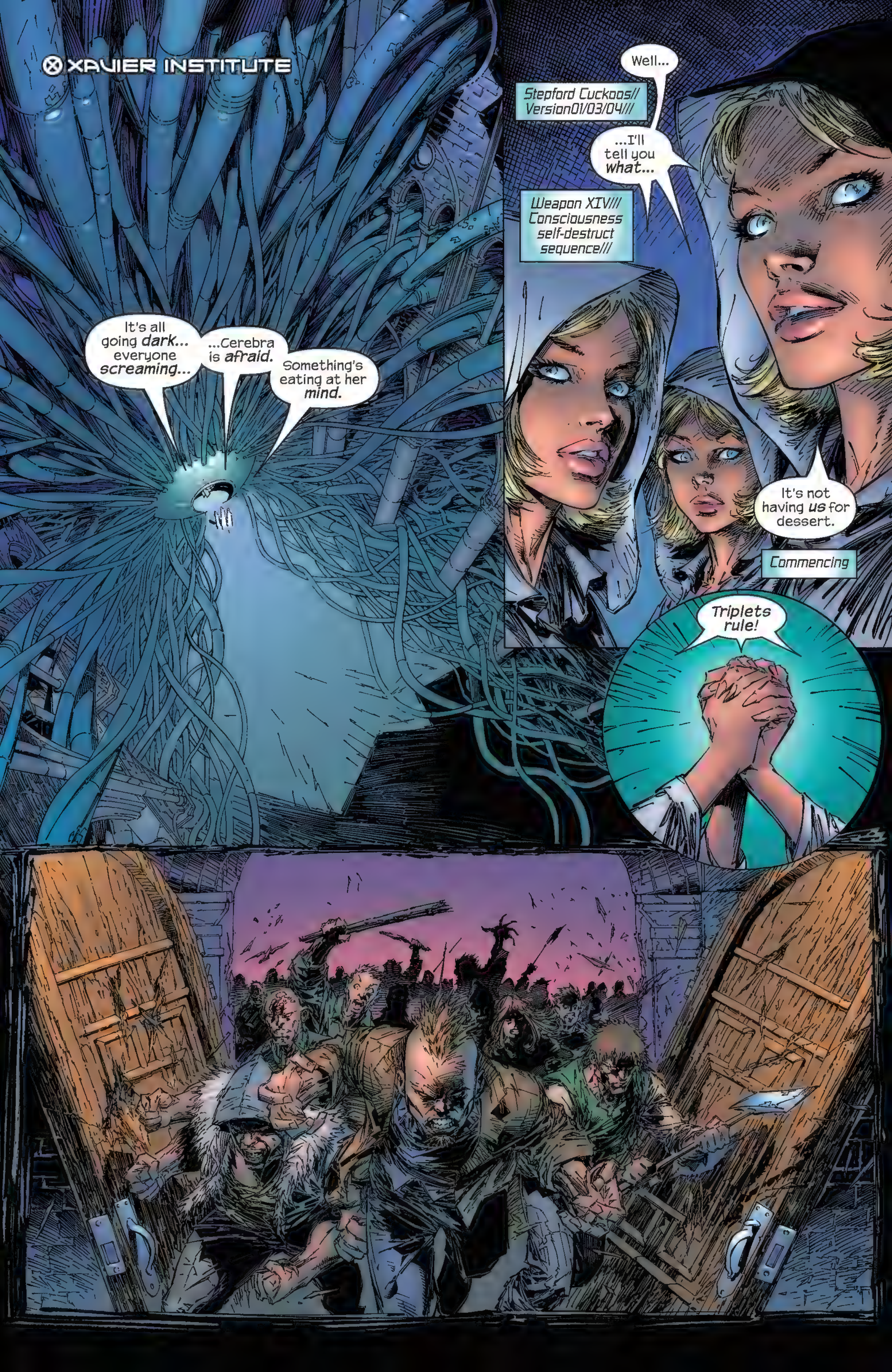

X-Men?
The Beast told me *X-Men* were lethal variant lifeforms, spreading like...like a genetic *sickness* across the planet... but...
...I came to *fix* something that was *dying,* Logan.
Tom Skylark!
The Phoenix is assuming a psychic attack posture.
Big deal.
But we have to be ready!
For *what?*
It's all *over,* E.V.A.
Rover saw us together and...and he thought I was all set to *dump* him for the latest model and it's all...
...nobody knows what we've *been through,* him and me.
I'm *nothing* without him.
The game's up.
Jean, these kids don't know what's *what,* but... you and me, *we've* seen it all before.
You ain't here as *anybody's* servant...yer the *Phoenix.*
Yer an A-grade telekinetic talent tapped into a *cosmic power source.*
But yer still Jean Grey-Summers!

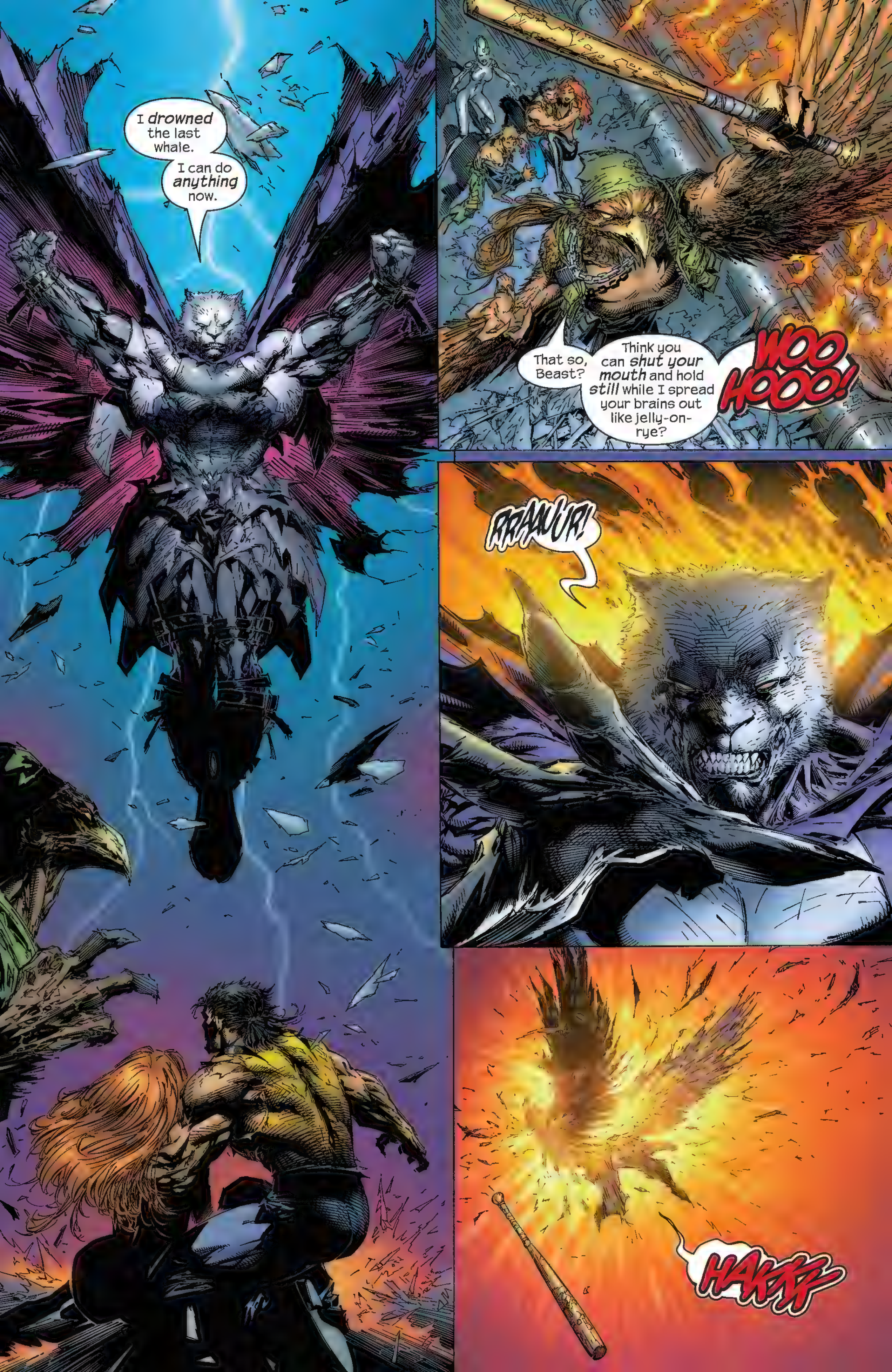

You have such a tricky, intricate mind. Don't...
Scott?
Logan?
Steady, Martha, dear.
My Shi'ar files tell me the Phoenix consciousness accesses its human host via the so-called *Crown Chakra* port at the top of the skull.
I saw all this *coming,* you know.
We're all going to *die,* but it's for a *good cause*...and if I've learned anything at the *Xavier Institute*...
...it's that a good cause *always* gives meaning to a bad death.
Unplug the Crown.

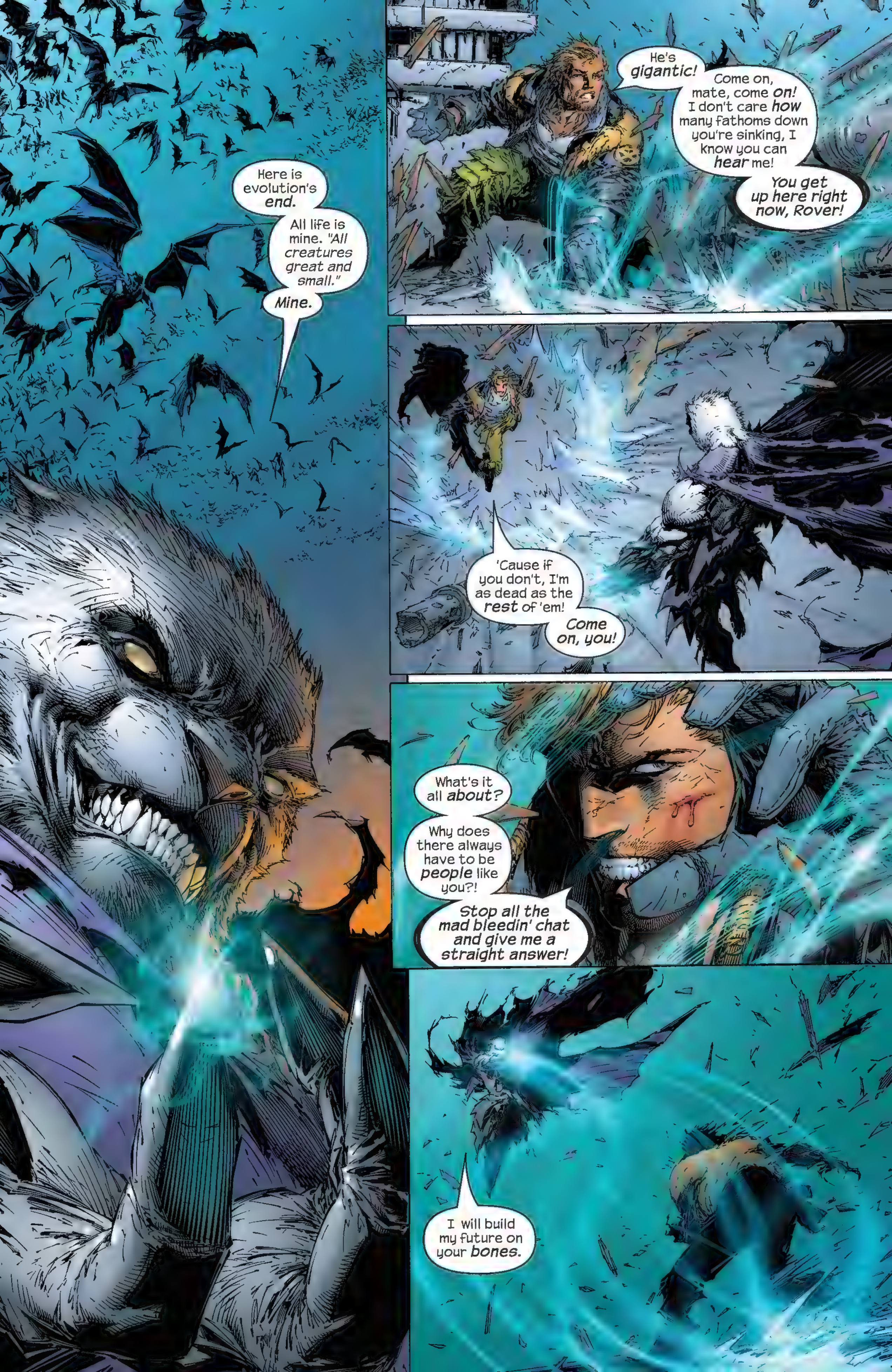

Tuuuh!
AKK
I gotcha, darlin'.
Luhg
Luh-Logan?
I was...in... in...this huge place...how long?
Jeannie.
Shh
150 years since we last saw your face.
150?
Oh, no.
What...what happened?

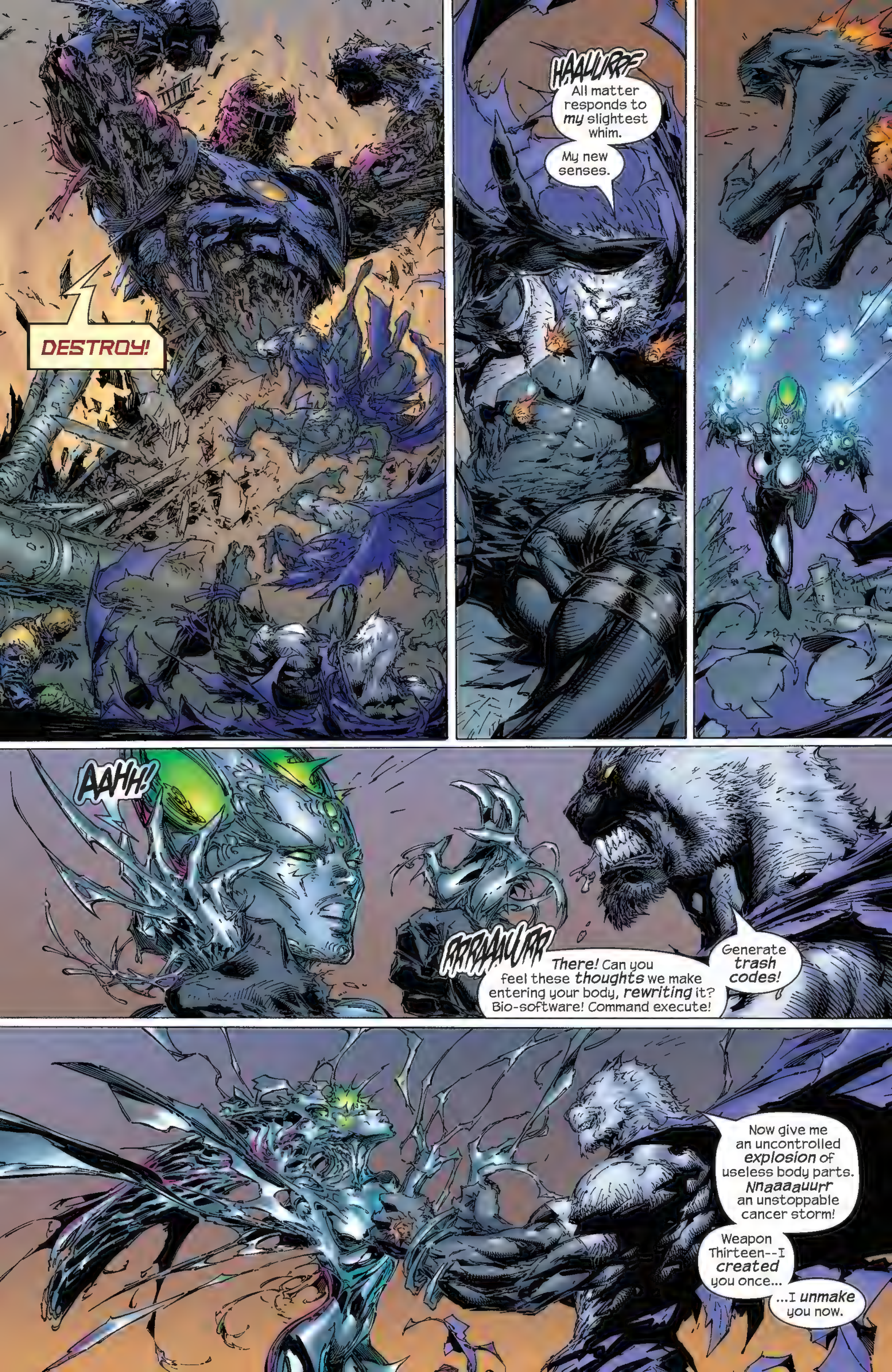

JEAN GREY-SUMMERS
SHE WILL RISE AGAIN
Magneto *killed* ya, under orders he never understood.
Scott lost heart and lost his chance.
Hank tried his *best.*
And it all *fell apart,* like it always does.
Hank tried *"Kick"* one night.
That was *long* before anyone realized Hypercortisone-D was *Sublime's* new *aerosol* form.
And by that time Hank was *gone,* replaced by smart bacteria and global disease.
Humanity *died.*
And we all went to *war* in the ruins.
It's been a *heck* of a time.

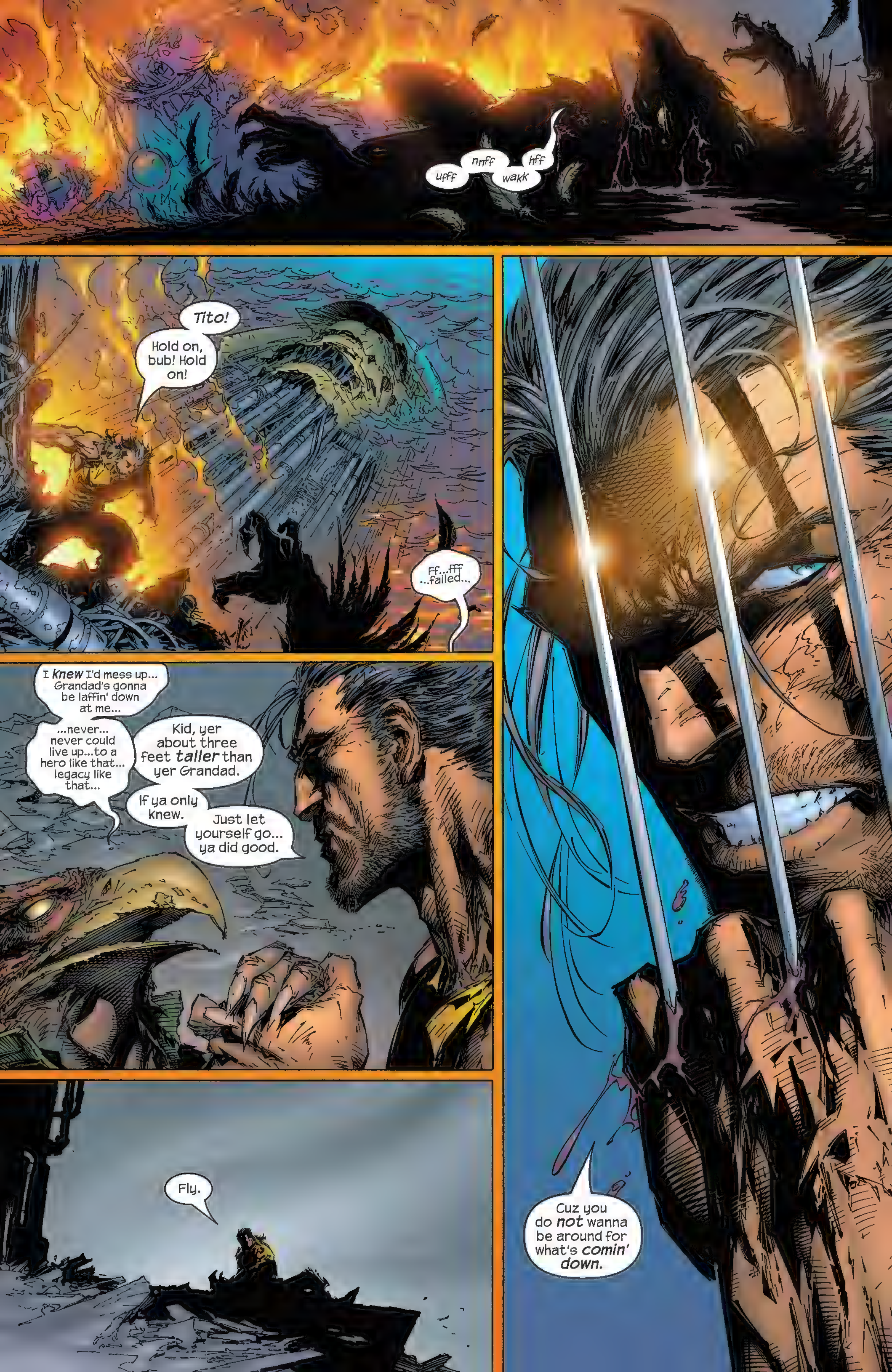

I *love* being in your *mind,* Martha... everything's so colorful and exciting in the cartoon world of *No-Girl.*
Your brains, my beauty...we've never really been appreciated in that *"Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid"* way, have we?
Oh, dear.
Not like this.

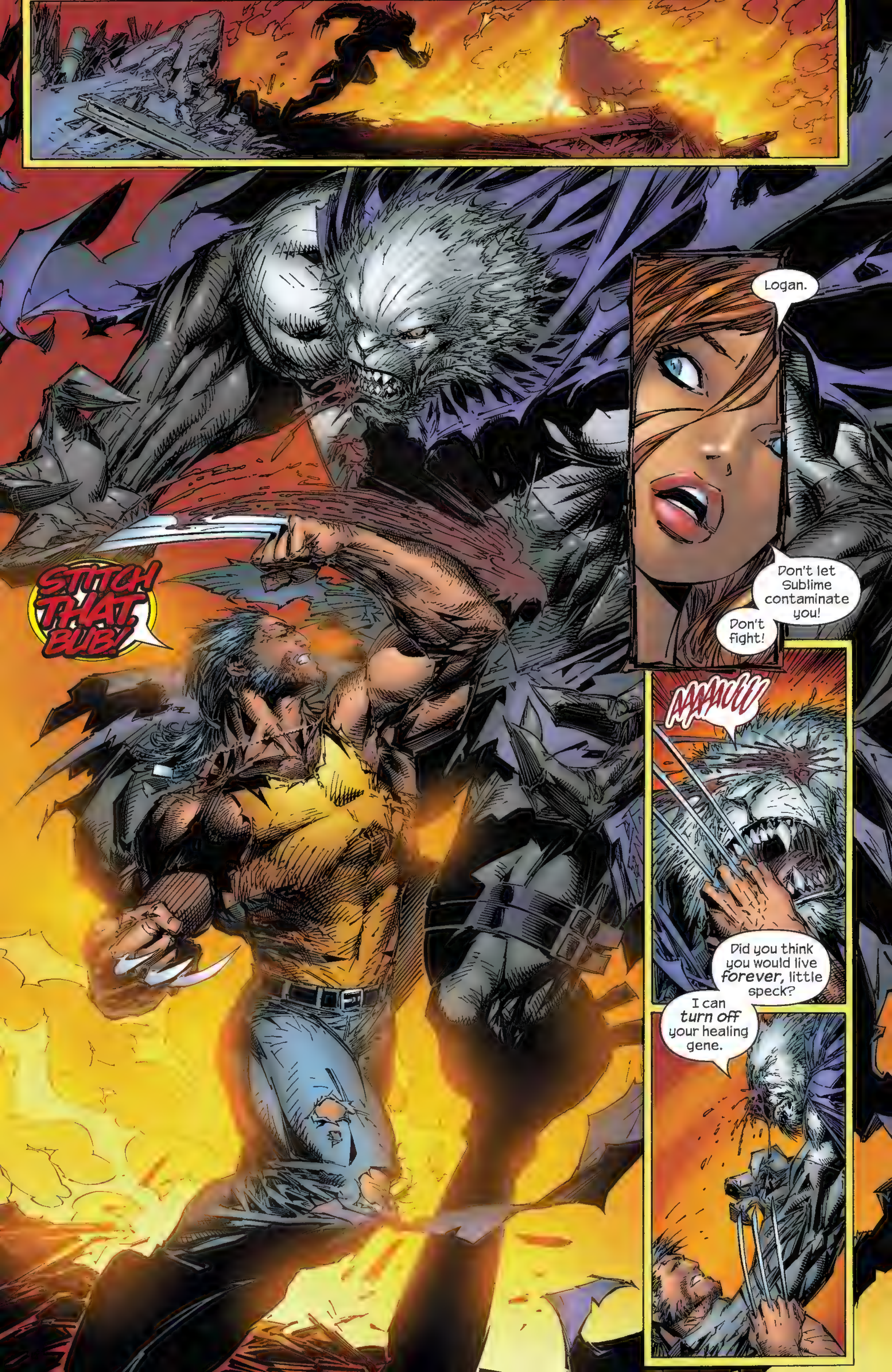

XAVIER INSTITUTE
It's all going *dark*... everyone *screaming*...
...Cerebra is *afraid.*
Something's eating at her *mind.*
Stepford Cuckoos// Version01/03/04///
Well...
...I'll tell you *what...*
Weapon XIV/// Consciousness self-destruct sequence///
It's not having *us* for dessert.
Commencing
Triplets rule!

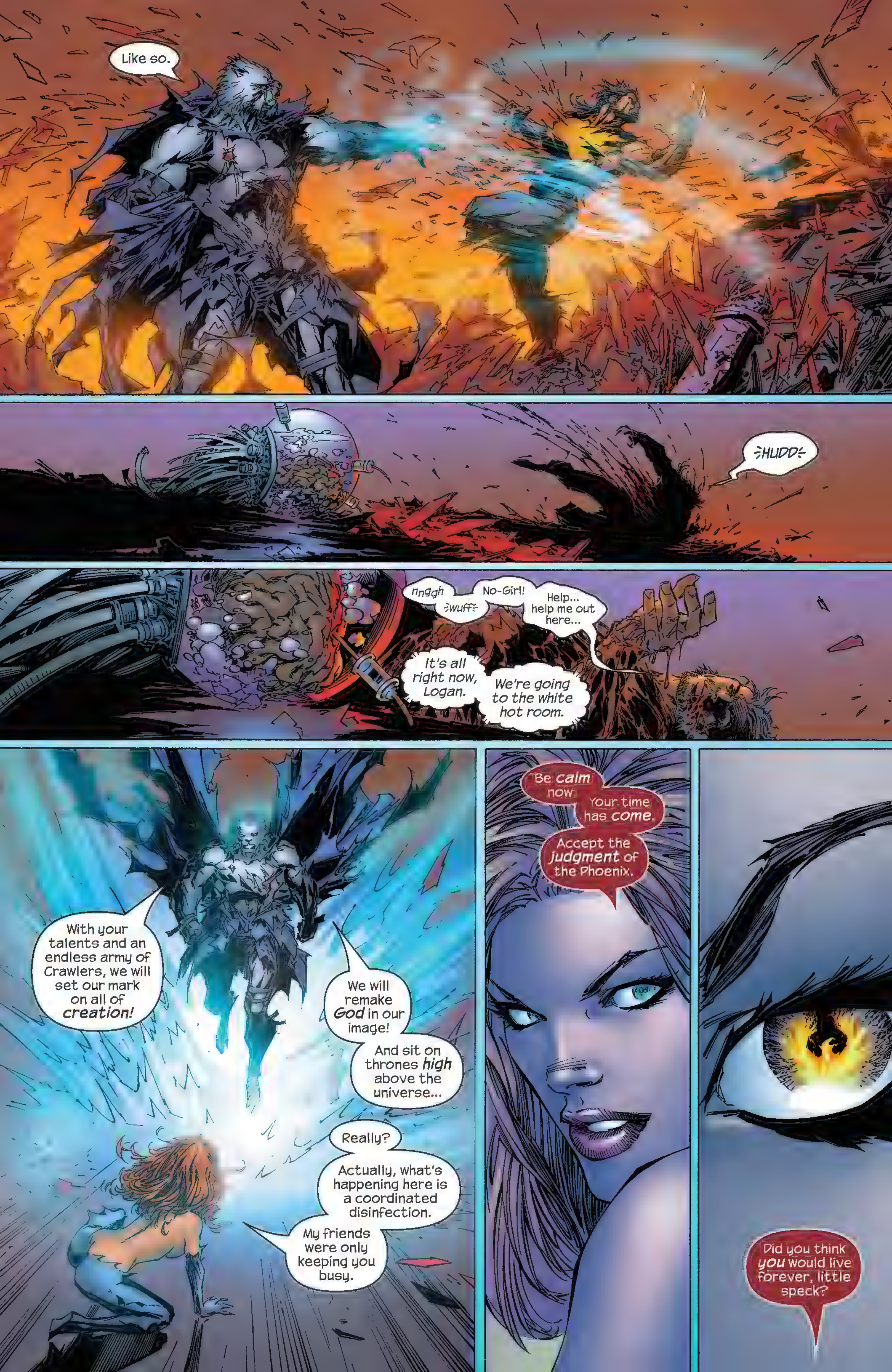

I *drowned* the last whale.
I can do *anything* now.
That so, Beast?
Think you can ***shut your mouth*** and hold ***still*** while I spread your brains out like jelly-on-rye?
WOO HOOO!
RRAAUUR!
HAKKK

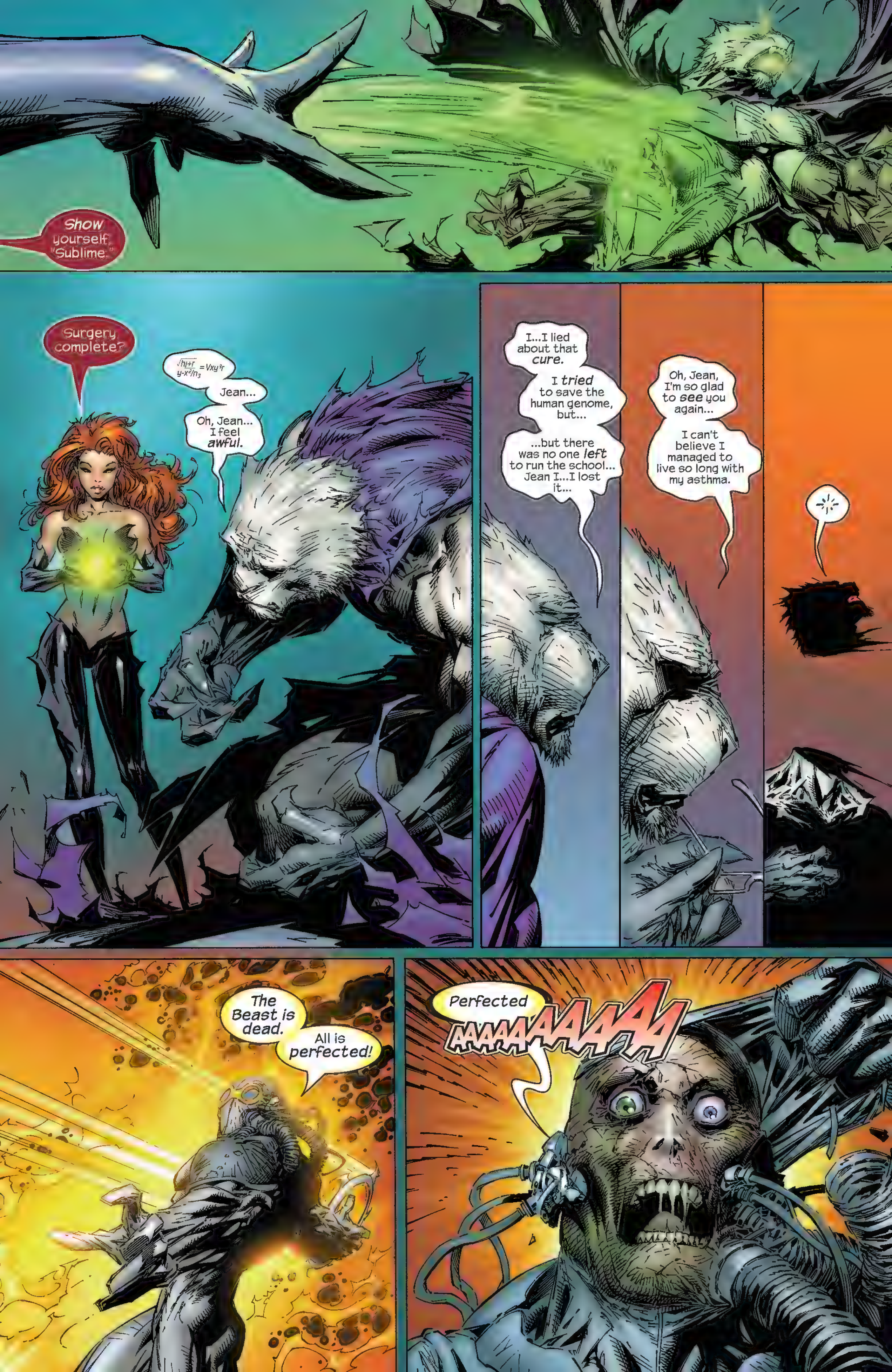

Here is evolution's *end.*
All life is mine. *"All creatures great and small."*
Mine.
He's *gigantic!*
Come on, mate, come *on!* I don't care *how* many fathoms down you're sinking, I know you can *hear* me!
You get up here right now, Rover!
'Cause if you don't, I'm as dead as the *rest* of 'em!
Come on, you!
What's it all *about?*
Why does there always have to be *people* like you?!
Stop all the mad bleedin' chat and give me a straight answer!
I will build my future on your *bones.*

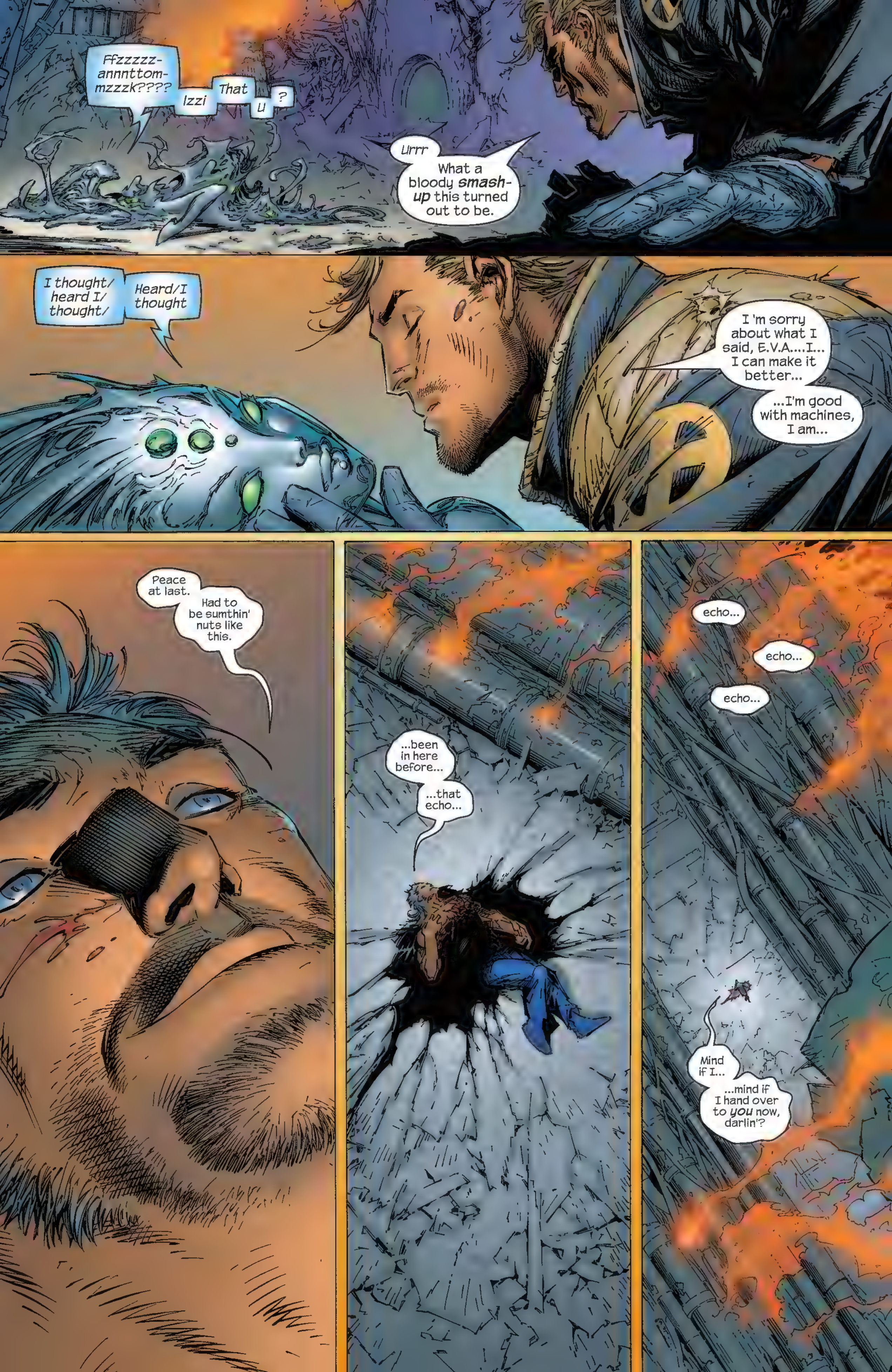

DESTROY!
HAAUURRF
All matter responds to *my* slightest whim.
My new senses.
AAHH!
RRRAAAUURR
There! Can you feel these *thoughts* we make entering your body, *rewriting* it? Bio-software! Command execute!
Generate *trash codes!*
Now give me an uncontrolled *explosion* of useless body parts. *Nnaaaauurr* an unstoppable cancer storm!
Weapon Thirteen--I *created* you once...
...I *unmake* you now.

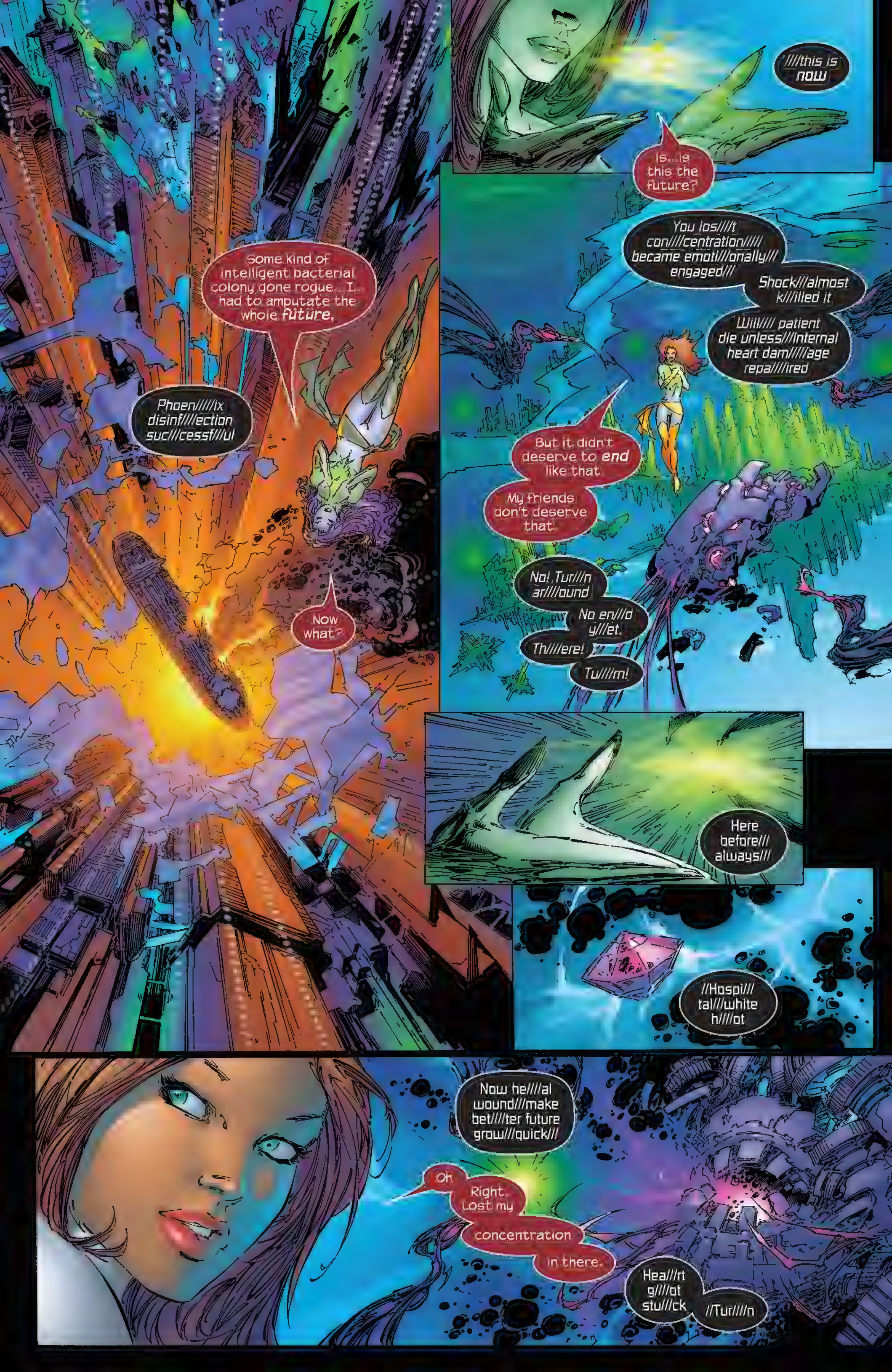

upff
nnff
wakk
hff
Tito!
Hold on, bub! Hold on!
FF...fff ...failed...
I *knew* I'd mess up... Grandad's gonna be laffin' down at me...
...never... never could live up...to a hero like that... legacy like that...
Kid, yer about three feet *taller* than yer Grandad.
If ya only knew.
Just let yourself go... ya did good.
Fly.
Cuz you do *not* wanna be around for what's *comin' down.*

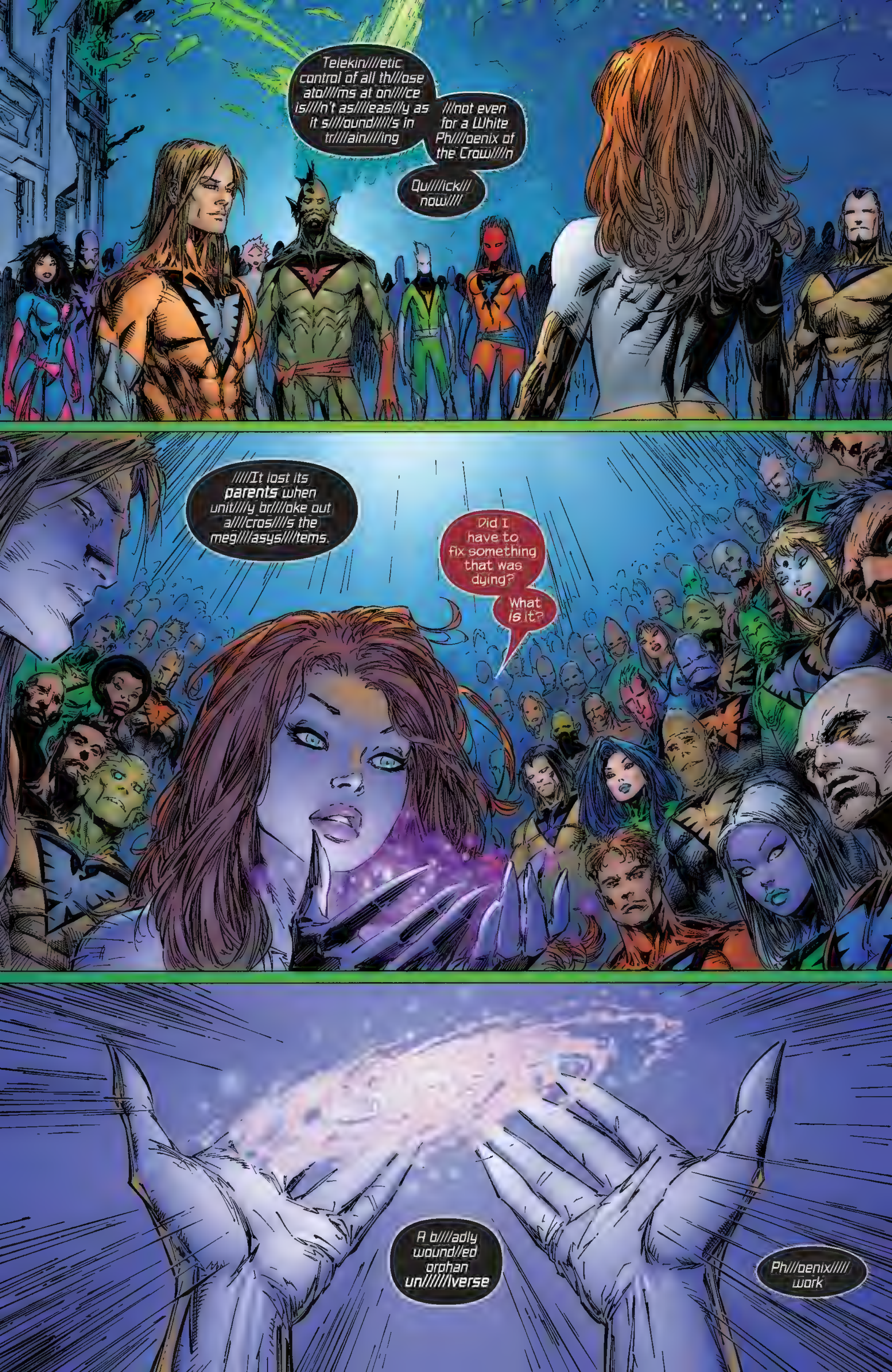

STITCH THAT, BUB!
Logan.
Don't let Sublime contaminate you!
Don't fight!
AAAAUUU
Did you think you would live *forever*, little speck?
I can *turn off* your healing gene.

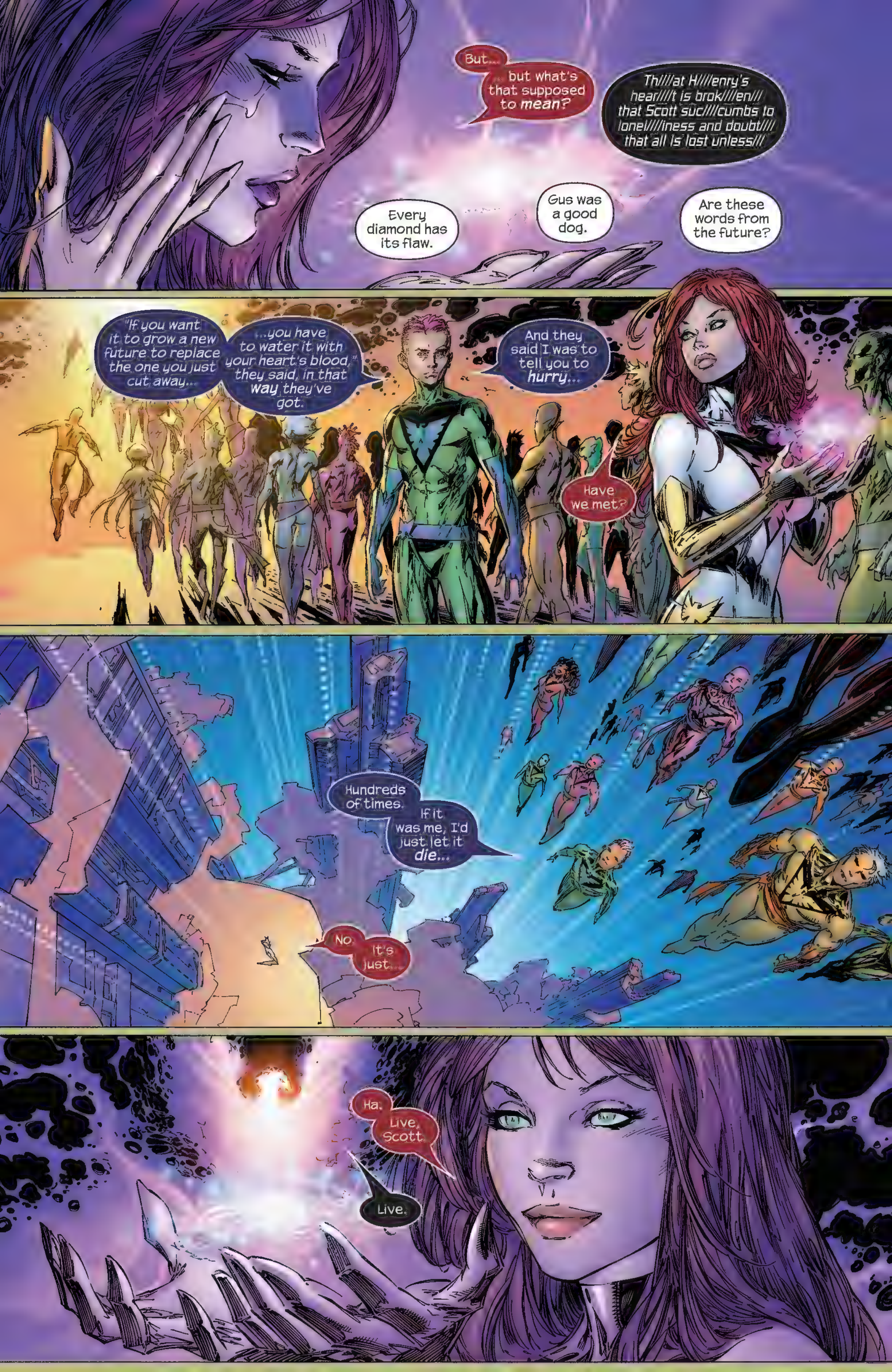

Like so.
HUDD
nnggh
wuff
No-Girl!
Help... help me out here...
It's all right now, Logan.
We're going to the white hot room.
With your talents and an endless army of Crawlers, we will set our mark on all of *creation!*
We will remake *God* in our image!
And sit on thrones *high* above the universe...
Really?
Actually, what's happening here is a coordinated disinfection.
My friends were only keeping you busy.
Be *calm* now.
Your time has *come.*
Accept the *judgment* of the Phoenix.
Did you think *you* would live forever, little speck?

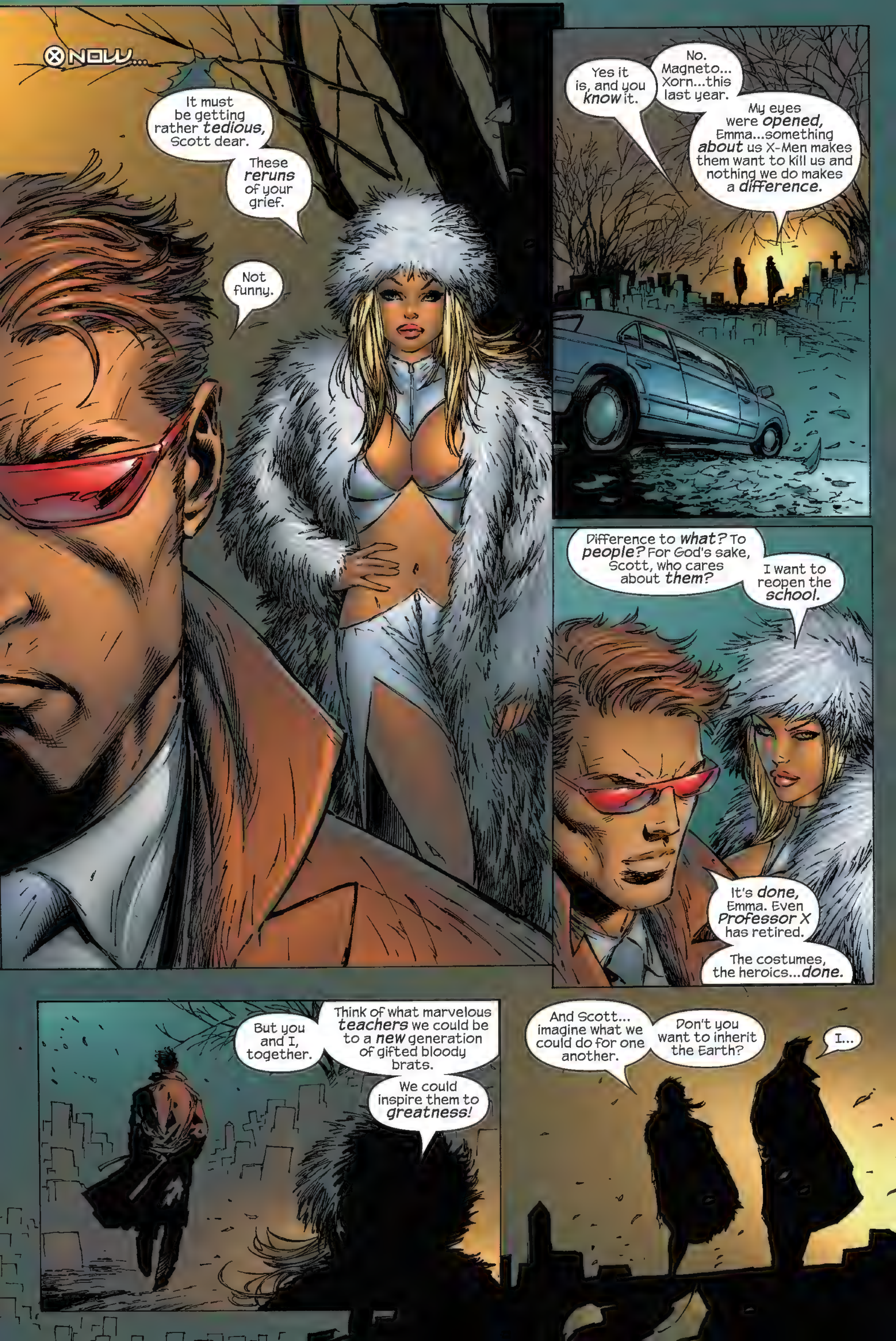

Show yourself, "Sublime."
Surgery complete?
$\frac{\sqrt{hj+r}}{y-x^2/n_3} = Vxy^3r$
Jean...
Oh, Jean... I feel awful.
I...I lied about that cure.
I tried to save the human genome, but...
...but there was no one left to run the school... Jean I...I lost it...
Oh, Jean, I'm so glad to see you again...
I can't believe I managed to live so long with my asthma.
The Beast is dead.
All is perfected!
Perfected AAAAAAAAAA

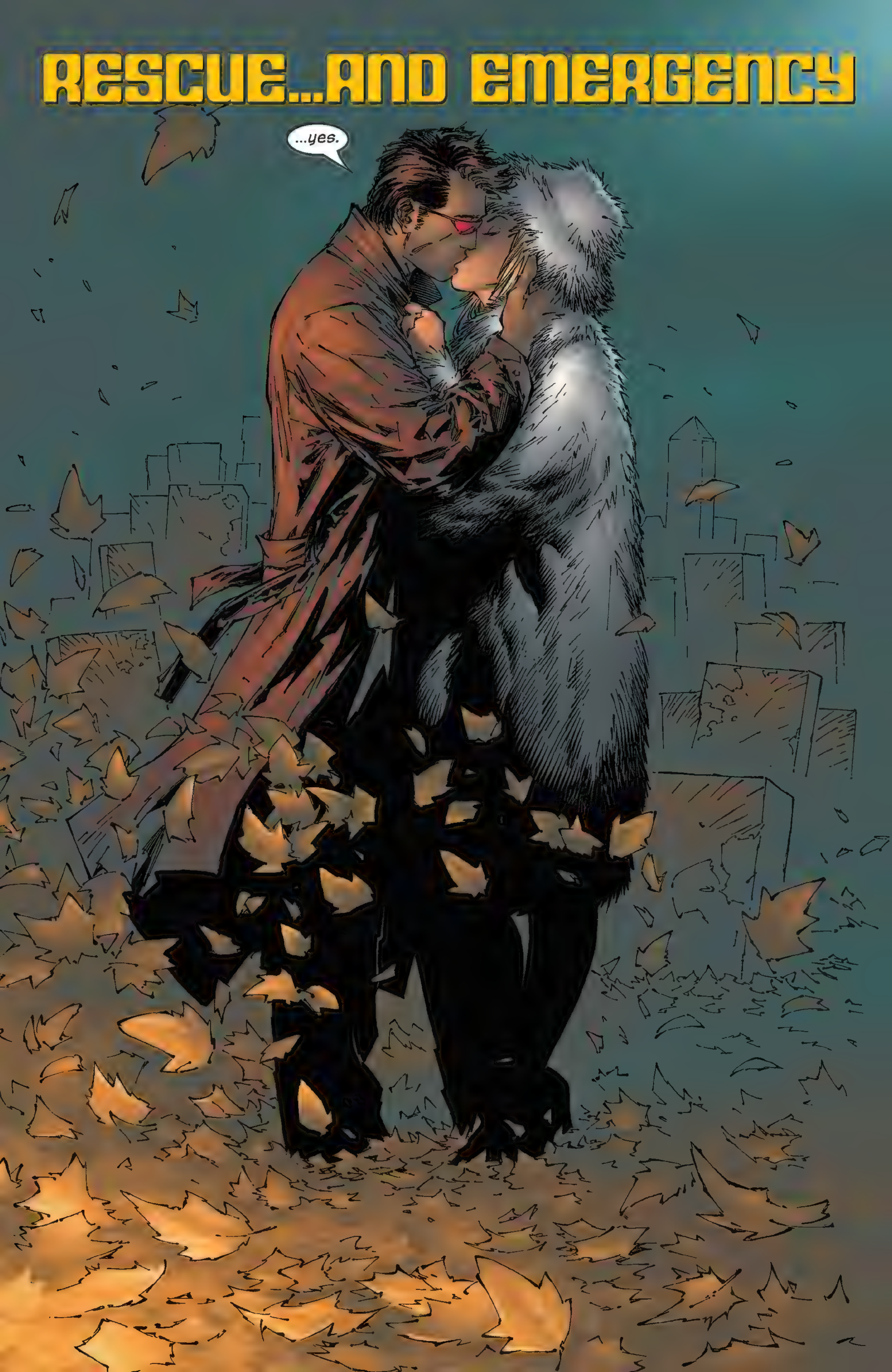

Ffzzzzz-annnttom-mzzzk????
Izzi
That
u
?
Urrr
What a bloody *smash-up* this turned out to be.
I thought/ heard I/ thought/
Heard/I thought
I 'm sorry about what I said, E.V.A....I... I can make it better...
...I'm good with machines, I am...
Peace at last.
Had to be sumthin' nuts like this.
...been in here before...
...that echo...
echo...
echo...
echo...
Mind if I...
...mind if I hand over to *you* now, darlin'?


Some kind of intelligent bacterial colony gone rogue... I... had to amputate the whole *future*.
Phoen/////ix disinf////ection suc///cessf///ul
Now what?
////this is now
Is... is this the future?
You los////t con////centration///// became emoti///onally/// engaged///
Shock///almost k///illed it
Will//// patient die unless///internal heart dam/////age repa////ired
But it didn't deserve to *end* like that.
My friends don't deserve that.
No! Tur///n ar////ound
No en///d y///et.
Th////ere!
Tu////rn!
Here before/// always///
//Hospi/// tal///white h////ot
Now he////al wound///make bet////ter future grow///quick///
Oh.
Right. Lost my
concentration
in there.
Hea///rt g////ot stu///ck
//Tur////n


Telekin////etic control of all th///ose ato////ms at on////ce is////n't as////eas///y as it s////ound/////s in tr////ain////ing
///not even for a White Ph////oenix of the Crow////n
Qu////ick/// now////
/////It lost its **parents** when unit////y br////oke out a////cros////s the meg////asys////tems.
Did I have to fix something that was dying?
What *is* it?
A b////adly wound//ed orphan un//////iverse
Ph///oenix///// work


But...
...but what's that supposed to *mean*?
Th////at H////enry's hear////t is brok////en/// that Scott suc////cumbs to lonel////iness and doubt//// that all is lost unless///
Every diamond has its flaw.
Gus was a good dog.
Are these words from the future?
"If you want it to grow a new future to replace the one you just cut away...
...you have to water it with your heart's blood," they said, in that *way* they've got.
And they said I was to tell you to *hurry*...
Have we met?
Hundreds of times.
If it was me, I'd just let it *die*...
No. It's just...
Ha. Live, Scott.
Live.


NOW...
It must be getting rather *tedious*, Scott dear.
These *reruns* of your grief.
Not funny.
Yes it is, and you *know* it.
No. Magneto... Xorn...this last year.
My eyes were *opened,* Emma...something *about* us X-Men makes them want to kill us and nothing we do makes a *difference.*
Difference to *what?* To *people?* For God's sake, Scott, who cares about *them?*
I want to reopen the *school.*
It's *done,* Emma. Even *Professor X* has retired.
The costumes, the heroics...*done.*
But you and I, together.
Think of what marvelous *teachers* we could be to a *new* generation of gifted bloody brats.
We could inspire them to *greatness!*
And Scott... imagine what we could do for one another.
Don't you want to inherit the Earth?
I...


RESCUE...AND EMERGENCY
...yes.

APPROVED

MORRISON MANIFESTO

20 OCTOBER 2000

Ideas by Grant Morrison
Sketches by Frank Quitely
Comments by Mark Powers

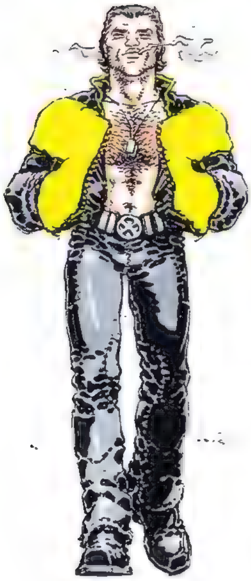
MORRISON MANIFESTO

THE MANIFESTO

Having just read through every X-MEN trade paperback available to humanity, I think I have a pretty clear idea of what works in this book and what doesn't. Here's what I think would be the most effective strategy for keeping old readers and, more importantly, for attracting a new contemporary audience.

1. In my opinion, and probably everyone else's too, the best work done on the book, the work which transformed the New X-MEN into Marvel's primary franchise was done by Chris Claremont and John Byrne between '77 and '80. Long after I'd ditched my comic book collection and started a punk rock band THIS was the one book I still followed because it was COOL. It's been fashionable to knock both creators in the intervening years and often with some justification but I defy anyone to read this run of X-MEN and not be impressed by the bravado and invention. Not only were both creators so far ahead of their game they were defining the rules of a whole NEW game (early Alan Moore is PURE Claremont and the reverberations of 'Days of Future Past' - with its depictions of the twilight days of the superheroes - are still echoing in too many books to mention) they had the freedom to create new material, reconceptualise the old stuff which still worked and ignoring the outmoded elements which had sapped the original X-MEN series of its vitality.

2. In the last decade or so, the tendency at Marvel has been intensely conservative; comics like the X-MEN have gone from freewheeling, overdriven pop to cautious, dodgy retro. What was dynamic becomes static – dead characters always return, nothing that happens really matters ultimately. The stage is never cleared for new creations to develop and grow. The comic has turned inwards and gone septic like a toenail. The only people reading are fanboys who don't count. The X-MEN, for all it was still Marvel's bestseller, had become a watchword for undiluted geekery before the movie gave us another electroshock jolt. And in the last decade, sales fell from millions to hundreds of thousands.



3. In the way that Claremont and Byrne did in the 80s and Jim Lee in the 90s we need to make the book COOL again. The movie has already done most of the work for us and there are MILLIONS of new potential readers out there for the taking: including the women who slavered over Hugh Jackman and who should be able to pick up THIS book and get the same sexy thrills from the comic book character (so no more blue and yellow spandex and Batman helmet. Why does Wolverine wear a helmet in the the same shape as his hair anyway? It just looks [redacted] stupid now) We have to stop talking to the shrinking fan audience and re-engage the attention of the mainstream. Longtime fans will read the book and [redacted] about it NO MATTER WHAT. We don't need to attract them, we need to make the book accessible to the real world audience. We need to get X-MEN and Marvel Comics in the news again, in the cool magazines and on TV. We need to recapture the college and the hipster audience because that audience is bigger than ever thanks to the movies and games, and thanks to things like 'Buffy' and 'The Matrix', the entire mainstream is pumped and primed to consume super-hero stories.

To make the X-MEN feel fresh once more, we need to take a closer, harsher look at what's not working in this book and the comics field in general. The recent X-MEN stuff has been written in an old-fashioned, overdense style for one, and we need to update, streamline and demystify the storytelling techniques considerably to appeal to modern sensibilities.

4. I think everyone agrees that we can no longer afford to be bogged down by 40 years of the most convoluted continuity in comics. This isn't the Ultimate line, however, and we have to find a way be faithful to the sprawling X-MEN mythos without being shackled by events in stories written thirty years ago, for a different world and a very different audience. My intention is to use the rich history of the X-MEN more as background window dressing and as a treasure trove of material we can recut for a new eager audience (in the same way

Claremont and Byrne sifted out the best stuff from the original series and combined it with new material). Elements like the Savage Land or the Shi'Ar Empire will be reappraised, re-introduced and woven into the larger scale science fiction universe of the X-MEN in such a way that it will seem as though we're seeing these concepts for the first time). The movie wisely went sci-fi instead of trying to appease the superhero crowd and I think we must do the same. The X-MEN is not a story about superheroes but a story about the ongoing evolutionary struggle between good/new and bad/old. The X-MEN are every rebel teenager wanting to change the world and make it better. Humanity is every adult, clinging to the past, trying to destroy the future even as he places all his hopes there. The superhero aspect should be seen as only a small element in the vast potential of this franchise.

★ exactly.

These stories will be accessible, punchy and modern. Each story arc should be like a movie or a TV miniseries depending on the focus - beginning middle and end, character development and resolution. Every time we start a new arc, every time we start a new issue in fact, we start fresh as if someone is picking up the book for the first time. The movie has made the characters familiar which helps us immensely. From here on in we shall strive to limit the cast to a handful of easily-recognisable figures.

5. If there are any really major outstanding questions left unanswered about our characters, let me know and I'll figure out a way to resolve them in future stories but for now, let's start with a fresh storyline, a completely different feel and allow people a chance to get to know the cast on the run again. That's how we play 'continuity' as we gently lay it to rest and replace it with er... 'super-consistency'. Everything you need to know will be explained in ANY given issue but long-time fans will be rewarded with extended character development and soap opera backstories. Think of the modular, accessible nature of storylines from the Buffy mythos which also have extended developmental arcs for long-term fans to follow. Same goes for the X-Files etc. The longer storylines in X-MEN would play out over a year at most. No more decades-long unrevealed secrets. And no more need be said about Logan's origins.

6. We have to get back the kick-ass anything can happen feeling that made the Claremont/Byrne issues so monumental. This is a POP book, as essential as the new Eminem release or the latest Keanu movie. We can rejoin the culture here and the only way to do it is to drop '80s and '90s notions of who our audience should be. The only way to get back in there is to deliver the stuff the movies and the games CAN'T. And what the mainstream audience wants from us (and I've asked a lot of 'em) is raw imagination, ready-made characters, outrageous spectacle, storming angst and emotional drama. Beautiful people with incredible powers doing startling, diverting things!

Back to basics, but with modern trappings... yep.

7. GET RID OF THE COSTUMES. Let's ditch the spandex for the new century and get our heroes into something that wouldn't make you look like a [redacted] if you wore it in the street. The movie had it almost right: I think we should go for hardcore bike style exo-rubber uniforms, maybe military pants and wrestling style boots. Whatever. A UNIFORM again. Youth culture looks are going uniform anyway. The look's brutalist and military and I think the X-MEN should reflect that to stay on the cutting edge of cool. Long leather coats with a big X on the back as our heroes get smarter, prouder and louder. Cyclops wearing ruby quartz contacts. I'd like to see some yellow in panelling or detailing on the costumes - if only to avoid the dull black leather look of every film superhero - but it should be pop art dayglo yellow, the kind cyclists and bikers wear to be seen. Let's discuss a new look. X-MEN is a soap opera about super-people in the same way that Dallas was a soap about oil people. The oil only provided window-dressing and an excuse to look great.

8. Let's aim for the big audiences. Let's push books we can be proud of on every level. Books that kids will dig for their sheer gee-whizz, kinetic strut, which college kids will buy for the rebel irony and adults will love for the distraction, just like the movies and the TV shows - just like when Stan was doin' it!!! I believe we have a rare opportunity to bust some self-imposed barriers and run screaming through the streets if we just cut loose a little and do work aimed at the mainstream, media-literate audience of kids, teenagers and adults with disposable income.

Trust me. It'll feel like nothing ever seen before but I intend to deliver the best, most faithful-to-the-concept X-MEN you could hope to imagine...

9. And, a propos of nothing - I just read that the most enthusiastic supporters of Darwin's evolutionary theory were a group of English scientists of the 1800s who called themselves...The X Club.

DRAFT 6-MONTH OVERVIEW

Here are some of the ideas I'd like to go with - some more detailed than others. At this stage and while we don't have another writer on board much of this is still open to discussion. and can be metamorphosed a little as we progress. Continuity is stripped right back because like most of the new readers we want to attract, I haven't read the last twenty years of X-titles and I ain't about to neither.

So far, for these stories, I'd like access to Prof X, Cyclops (assuming he'll be back from the dead), Wolverine, Colossus, Jean Grey, Moira McTaggert and a bunch of no-hopers we can kill, including the population of Genosha (the characters from the movie basically, plus others). Characters can move between books as long as basic consistency rules are observed As the months progress I'd like to get rid of a number of pointless supplementary characters, while introducing new and more relevant members to the team.

Colossus + Moira both died recently... if we're to get away from the elements that are "static/septic," they have to stay dead. The X-men, like us, know loss.

ISSUE 1 ARC 1: E IS FOR EXTINCTION

Let's just start fresh and go in hard. Splash page - Professor X calmly holds two pistols to his temples and says 'Get out of my brain or I fire...'

Then cut to '30 000 years earlier:'

Where a man and a woman of the 21st century are watching the brutal slaying of the last Neanderthals by a group of Cro-Magnon apemen. The man is a to-be-decided SUIT connected to the Sentinel programme. The woman is our new mystery villain - the most terrifying mutant of all - Charles Xavier's twin sister, separated at birth after a life or death psychic struggle in the womb. Her existence unsuspected until now, she will weave a trail of havoc linking our first year of storylines. Imagine a telepathic Hannibal Lecter, with access to all known mutant abilities. An identity so well hidden, a plan so well-laid it will keep the fans guessing for months.

The SUIT looks appalled at the grotesque murder of the last Neanderthals by the first Cro-Magnon - the original Cains slaying the gentle evolutionary Abel. The woman is showing him this vivid virtual drama for a reason. She has a bombshell to drop.

'Neanderthal man. The last of his kind...' the woman is saying. Homo sapiens neanderthalensis. The end of an evolutionary line that didn't work out, replaced by a smarter, more aggressive species...'

The peaceful Neanderthals are beaten to death as this seductive hate sermon continues across two kinetic pages.

'A species called Homo sapiens sapiens.' she says.

Absolutely perfect lead in... especially for new readers.

'Now a faster, more aggressive race has come to replace dominant humanity. Homo sapiens superior. The mutants.

'You've read my report. Within four generations humankind will be EXTINCT.'

She smiles, sinister, unknown but eerily familiar. A terrifying new presence in the world of the X-MEN.

'That's why I asked you here to talk about HEROD.'

We do not know who this new villainess is but the signs are ominous. As savage primeval drama plays out and our pre-credits sequence as we cut away...

To supercool credits page with big digital MTV images of our heroes – and the title E is for extinction with the E done in a circle like on the 'Endangered Species' sign in zoos.

Then cut to the school and we're off. Professor X and Jean Grey test out a new version of Cerebro - The Prof's in centerstage on a high tech podium. He's wearing the familiar Cerebro helmet but trailing wires connect him to a booster system - a giant Cerebro shell - an amplifier for the Prof's already considerable search and locate talents.

Charles Xavier gazes down upon a telepathically-generated Earth horizon - seeing spikes of blue energy wherever new mutant presences are registered around the globe. There are dozens of tiny spikes of blue across the planet, some brighter and more concentrated than others.

'More of us. All the time more.' Xavier muses. He psychically zooms in on a hotspot of new mutant activity.

Nicaragua.

As he probes, something troubles Xavier then it's gone. He calls the X-Men in.

The X-Men are in action in Sydney, securing some rogue mutants then evading the hostile police in a Blackbird action sequence. Let's give the Blackbird orbital capacity and take her up into the lower edgers of space, down across the Pacific to Westchester, where the school is being prepared for a new term

Meantime our mystery villain, Charlie X and the SUIT are removing the VR headsets which just generated the chilling reconstruction of Neanderthals having their brains smashed in. Charlie and SUIT are in a military copter touching down in the remains of a guerrilla camp deep in the jungles of Nicaragua.

There are odd twisted remains there among the trees. familiar colors in unusual, half-glimpsed shapes. We almost recognise...Sentinel robots?

→ echoing the theme of evolution

Charlie talks about SUIT's involvement in the Sentinel programme. It's why he's been asked out here. (All the soldiers are under Charlie's telepathic command but we don't know that yet. It looks like a legitimate military operation) Some time back an attempt was made to give the all-purpose Sentinel machines the ability to customise and update themselves in response to a given mutant threat. The idea was to create machines not only able to repair and reconfigure themselves but capable of constantly updating and revising the original humanoid Sentinel form. A test group of Sentinels were allowed to run wild within a 100 mile radius site, deep in the jungles of Nicaragua. These black ops, mutated Sentinels have now been rediscovered and Charlie X wants the project re-opened.

All Charlie needs is Sentinel access codes to regain control of the rediscovered Wild Master Mold. The monstrosities created within it are the key to HEROD - the Final Solution to the mutant problem.

Back at the school. The Prof assigns his X-MEN to the Nicaraguan hotspot.

Wolverine hangs back, sniffing the unease beneath Xavier's expensive cologne.

'What's up, Charlie? You smell nervous.'

'I'm not sure. Proceed with caution.'

The X-Men are gone. The lights are down.

Xavier enters Cerebro after hours. He's a little concerned and wants to probe the oddly familiar mind he felt earlier. Something so frightening and yet so..... He extends his consciousness warily.

And without warning is easily and immediately taken over by a mind far beyond his own. His great intellect is instantly overwhelmed. An insidious, grotesquely familiar voice seeps into the folds of his brain.

'I want your brain, Charles. I'm going to take your place and do things.
You won't be able to resist me.'

Xavier feels his own mind being...displaced from his body. He fights but he's overwhelmed. A panic attack, coming from some deep dark place inside the Prof. is confusing him and makes him foolish and increasingly afraid.

There's only one thing left. Xavier focuses his will on his body. He's losing his psychic grip but one last jolt makes his arms rise to his head. He's pointing the guns we saw on page 1 bringing us full circle.

'Get out of my brain or I fire.'

*!!

Badass, as he should be -- This is The guy w/ The preeminent mind on the planet.

The presence lets go and Xavier senses a malicious humor, a cold appraisal of his logic.

'Good move. I'll get you next time, Charles...'

Jean runs in, having experienced a wild and nightmarish mindquake. Xavier catches his breath, warns her not to use her power. She still feels the great tidal wave of a monstrous retreating will.

'The most powerful mutant intelligence ever encountered...' Xavier gasps, shocked. 'I was completely unprepared. I had to bluff...'

Jean picks up the guns. They're empty.

'Now I know... whatever it is wants me alive. It wants my brain alive.' Something dark stirs in Xavier's head.

In the jungles Charlie X breaks her contact with Xavier. We notice that she's sweating hard and is wiping blood from her nose. Her feat has not been without effort. She composes a smile, triumphant although hurt and ever so slightly aged by what she's just done. It doesn't stop her hate rant:

'The only hope for mankind is to destroy Homo superior while their species is still too young to fight back. The extermination of infant mutantkind begins here and now ... All we lacked was the means, the weaponry.'

She leads the SUIT out through the skeletal, scavenged wrecks of military vehicles, past gutted choppers, human remains, some parts of damaged Sentinels with strange configurations. Out into a clearing overlooking magnificent rainforest, waterfalls and jagged distant mountains. Rising up, half-hidden by morning mists is a vast structure in humanoid form - it must be hundreds of feet high. The awesome Master Mold of the Wild Sentinels.

'Project HEROD can begin.'

ISSUE 2 ARC 1: E IS FOR EXTINCTION

The second part of 'E is for extinction' has a shock opening with the destruction of Genosha by Wild Sentinels from the Nicaraguan Master Mold. It's like Hiroshima with robot monsters and we can have all manner of superfluous mutant bastards wiped out in one genocidal spree. None of the nation's anti-Sentinel procedures seem to have been effective and there are last messages which show vague images of monstrous mechanical shapes stripping apart all machinery, reducing bodies to pulp.

Cool.. but what about Magneto..? Connect this to end of prev. arc -- all we need is a line...

HEROD has begun and it's goodbye Genosha.

Charlie X is happy with the first strike of her plan. She and the SUIT from the Sentinel programme are in the Master Mold and the codes he's already given her have permitted this terrible demonstration of power. The destruction of an entire nation has been wrought merely by extending and reducing the Wild Sentinels area of permitted activity. One strike and the cradle has fallen.

'We've wiped out most of their civilian population. Their warrior caste won't be so easy and we should expect them to retaliate soon...'

Hints and secrets. Charlie has a hidden co-conspirator, a name so deadly it cannot be spoken. And she continues to talk of 'replacing' Prof. Xavier in some insidious way. We get a sense of the depth of this evil, as yet unknown woman's plans in this issue. The scale of her psychosis is cosmic.

As she leads the SUIT through the heart of the towering Master Mold, past ranks of poised, insectile Sentinels, we discover ranks of captured mutants. These pitiful specimens are being drained of energy and useful parts.

Meantime, the X-MEN have arrived at the ruined guerrilla camp and find everyone dead. They make their way towards the Master Mold, encountering Wild Sentinel swarms. At last we get to see some of these adapted, customised monsters. The X-MEN defeat the Sentinels - not without injury - but as they wearily break down the last of the robot horrors, the swarms return from Genosha, bearing machine parts and biomass.

They're going to arrive too late to save the life of the unlucky SUIT who's handed over all the Sentinel access codes which allow control of the Wild Sentinels.

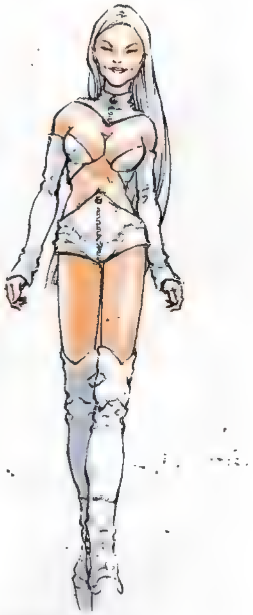
Bang. He's dead. She simply blows the fuses in his brain.

Charlie X sister then bends over the human vegetable and restores her youth by sucking out his. She looks up as the X-MEN breach the Master Mold's defences. Calmly she prepares to take control of the Master Mold CPU again and use it to send Wild Sentinel swarms across the globe, programmed to locate and exterminate all adult and infant mutants. New Sentinels emerge from the mechanical hatcheries, eager to fulfil these new instructions from their Master Mold.

Is she part of this cast..? Have her slated elsewhere ..Keep it tight.

Storm and other X-Men are in Genosha helping with disaster relief and investigations in Genosha. They figure something out and try to liaise with the Nicaraguan team.

The X-MEN have penetrated the Master Mold, outsmarting the Wild Sentinel pursuit. With horror, they find the trapped mutants inside the Mold - machines dissect the unfortunates, analysing and classifying them. A clinical butcher shop of experimentation, study, vivisection without pity or human feeling. As the others take care of these victims, Wolverine and Cyclops continue together to take out Charlie X and the Master Mold. Hashing out the issues, they make their way through the giant internal workings of the Master Mold in a last ditch effort to save their entire species.



As the action goes into overdrive we end with a quietly ominous interlude: as Xavier consults with Moira McTaggert on Muir Island. She has genetic scan charts. Pictures of DNA sequences.

'Is it true, Moira?' Xavier asks.

'Probably yes. If my research is right, the human race will be extinct within 4 generations.'

ISSUE 3 ARC 1: E IS FOR EXTINCTION

With much cool hyper-action, the X-MEN defeat the Master Mold and deactivate the Wild Sentinels. Charlie X seems to be defeated but we as readers know it can't be that easy...can it ?

Any captured mutants left alive in the dissection chambers of the Master Mold are taken into medical care back at the school. The dead are returned to the path lab for identification. This noble act of compassion will have several immensely bad repercussions for our heroes however.

Just when it seems it's all over...Charlie rises from apparent death in the path lab. She kills whoever's on duty then mounts an assault on the students and Cerebro. The X-MEN are on the scene. Charlie's powers seem to be enormous - she has the entire range of mutant abilities and overcomes the whole team. This monster has killed millions and for a horrible moment, Charlie seems unstoppable. Xavier and Jean fight Charlie X to a psychic standstill while the others weaken her body...which is all part of her plan. We're learning a little more about her each time, clues are being planted. At the height of her rampage she's killed in a duel with Professor X.

Or is she?

Whatever. The Professor is badly injured in the duel and lies near death as his consciousness goes into shock and the electrical activity of his brain ceases.

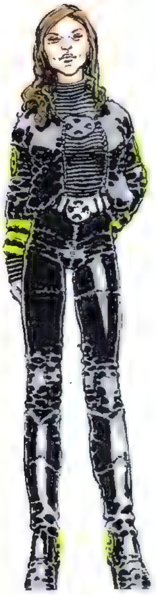
ISSUE 4 TOMORROW TODAY (this is a stand-alone story. I'd like to do regular one-shots which concentrate on character relationships or solo stuff)

Prof. X is recovering from last issue. He's on Muir Island with Moira McTaggert. This issue gears down a little and, with economy and suspense, fills in some details of Xavier's life for new readers. His goals, his hopes. Revealed as we probe into Xavier's psyche for strange, long-buried memories of Charlie X. Meanwhile Moira McTaggert's research seems to verify the worst...

at the school, instead? Would be more expedient, in any case.

She's found the E gene in humans; the genetic terminator switch for a species. Mankind is programmed for genetic suicide. Within three generations, there will be nothing but mutants.

Mutants births are accelerating. The mutants are more optimally adapted to occupy an evolutionary niche that once belonged to mankind alone. Humanity, whichever way you roll the dice is doomed.



As these secrets unfold we learn a lot about Xavier's background, and drop some major hints about the identity of Charlie X. We re-explain Xavier's connection to the interstellar empire of the Shi'ar - who are even now sending a starship to Earth on the understanding that their super-technology is all that can heal Xavier's neural sickness.

The great Shi'ar ship is hovering over the moonlit ocean.

After a quiet emotional moment, Xavier is left alone with the computer. He sends all of Moira's E gene data to the world's news agencies.

As he's about to leave, Moira emerges from the lab, suddenly realising that something ain't right.

'I found out...nobody ever knew. I know who you are...I know what you are'

'I'd like some time to say goodbye to Moira,' Xavier tells the Shi'ar.

Xavier turns to Moira and smiles evilly.

Shortly...he emerges from the lab and is beamed into the Shi'ar ship which lifts off into the night, utterly silent, leaving the deserted island dark under a lowering sky.

Moira dead in her laboratory.

And in a startling epilogue Charlie X turns up at the school and takes a beating only to croak... 'It's me, it's Charles. My mind in her body ... It's Charles...'

ISSUE 5 ARC 2: GERM FREE GENERATION

Moira McTaggert has been found dead among her notes and her final researches have hit the Press. The 'Extinction Dossier' as it's being called, reveals how humankind is genetically programmed to self-destruct within a few generations. It points to rising infertility rates. It shows how mutant births are on the increase and how the mutants have sought to suppress this grim truth. It paints a grim picture for the future of a species and suddenly the whole human/mutant dynamic is changed overnight.

This is making the mutants militant and this story takes us down to street level a little as we see the emergence of a new generation of mouthy mutants, who wear their pride like a badge...

'We're not the freaks any more. YOU are...'

In this character-based arc we take a look at some of the ways mutant culture influences human culture - in the way that black culture in the US or Asian culture here in the UK has provided 'street' input for white culture. I'd like to see mutant kids making their own weird music, which in turn is influencing hip human kids. 'Rikki- my mom doesn't know I'm having a mutant baby!' That kind of stuff from the general background environment of the X-MEN fictional universe. Details to flesh things out and make their unreal world feel more like our real world through a warped mirror.

This storyline introduces two new characters and some new villains. The focus character here is the new Angel - a teenage tearaway who may prove too hot to handle.

Angel is a nasty piece of work. A typical Jerry Springer case from an abusive background. She's hard, nasty and rude and her particular mutation is to wake up in a gooey sac to find that she's sprouted immense shimmering bluebottle wings and can spit a corrosive saliva. Does she use her newfound powers to get even with everybody who ever gave her a hard time?

Not if the X-MEN can get to her first. And they'd better move fast because a new group has targeted the fledgling mutant and she's about to become the latest victim of THE BLACK KROSS.

The Black Kross are a new villain group with a radical and terrifying agenda. These remorseless killers, masked and robed in white like a weird cross between surgeons, the Spanish Inquisition and the Ku Klux Klan, hope to EVADE the predicted demise of humanity by mutating themselves into a new, more advanced HYBRID race (an outgrowth of the 'trans-speciesists' movement. These marginal oddballs are people who claim to be evolutionary mutants trapped in human bodies and who practise various surgical procedures to help them become Homo Perfectus) Organised almost like a religious cult, the Black Kross offers an alternative to both mankind and the mutants. Their leader is a Scientology/NLP-style shadowy guru named Jon Sublime who dispenses corporate wisdom in perfect soundbites. From television oracles and their trademark silver buses, Sublime and his lieutenants dispense the radical self-help tenets of Homo Perfectus - known as the Third Species to his growing grass roots flock - people from all walks of life willing to pay for survival in the face of extinction, willing to don the sinister uniform of the Black Kross Militia and adapt their own physical forms by surgical procedure and pharmaceutical overload. To become more aggressive than all current species. Sublime has a talent for creating emotionally charged self-empowerment scenes and for transforming ordinary men and women into relentless self-justifying killing machines.

'When men and mutants wipe one another out, Homo Perfectus will be the dominant race! Beyond Man! Beyond Mutant!' He rants as more frightened people sign up for the makeover course.

All the high-minded rhetoric conceals an ugly reality: Black Kross surgeon-acolytes are simply in the business of butchering mutants and stealing their organs or genetic material to be used as graft tissue stock - the building blocks of Homo Pefectus. Newly-activated mutant genes are less likely to be rejected and so the group intends to deliberately target young mutants for surgical assault. Sublime and his followers see both humans and mutants as unclean, inhuman, dead end branches from the true evolutionary tree. Self-mutation is seen as a higher moral decision, justifying all acts. A calling almost. All else is simply a means to one end - the creation of Homo Perfectus, the new way forward. The Black Kross have turned the mutant 'X' on its side and added to the hyper-clean, scientifically-precise yet sinister medical overtones of their appearance. This is a chilling science-religion and a very real threat to all mutants.

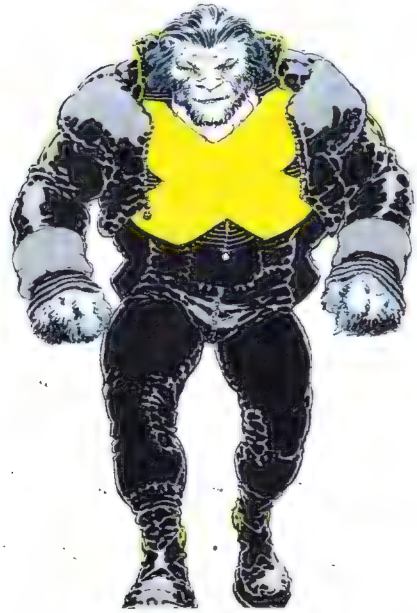
Travelling in hi-tech lynch mobs, the Black Kross strip emergent mutants of their special genetic traits. They perform surgery and graft mutant organs into themselves to gain eerie new powers. Another sick product of the mass hysteria engendered by the Extinction Dossier, the Homo Perfectus harvester squads must now be stopped before they track down and kill the new Angel.

Meanwhile, Charles Xavier, trapped in Charlie X's body is beginning to get sick even as he reveals what he knows about Charlie. Close to revealing the mind-boggling truth, Charlie has a seizure. Suddenly Xavier's in a crippled body again and in a wheelchair. A rapid investigation reveals the next horrific twist in our heroes' lives...

Charlie X has deliberately administered a lethal toxin to her own body, to create a biological trap which Xavier's mind cannot escape. Her central nervous system is self-destructing! The Professor's great mind is trapped in a brain programmed to degenerate into Alzheimer's dementia within weeks!

ISSUE 6 ARC 2: GERM FREE GENERATION

Conclusion of the Black Kross storyline. The X-MEN win the day but a new force has entered the arena. We meet Basilisk, the Creature, Tasmanian, Ernst and Cellophane of the Black Kross Elite - a team of lunatics who have self-mutated into wondrous forms. They now want Angel's huge insect wings to perform the world's first successful wing transplant on bird-faced Ernst. Basilisk's gaze can paralyze any nervous system. The Creature's transplanted mutant heart allows him to animate the dead body he inhabits etc...The X-MEN kick their [redacted] but all the mutants who faced the Wild Sentinels in the last story are starting to get weak and sick and no-one knows what's wrong.



The introduction of the new Angel is complete however when Warren Worthington, with some irony and no less compassion, loans his name for a while to our nasty, fly-winged brat. She joins the team but she looks like trouble. And she will be trouble. This kid is the anti-Kitty Pryde: disruptive, angry, hurt, unlikable. The condensation of every foul-mouthed, [redacted]-up kid on 'Sally' or 'Rikki' or 'Jerry'. We don't even know if she's white or Hispanic. She could be anything. This kid is a mess. But will the Angel reveal hidden depths? Or will she actually, ultimately wind up too much of a little [redacted] to make the grade? Her story unfolds...

ISSUE 7 THE MAN FROM ROOM X

In this one-shot we explore the background of our other new recruit while all around, X-MEN get sick and collapse. Wolverine's healing factor is working overtime to keep him alive but the others aren't so lucky.

The main story goes like this: rescued from the Wild Sentinel Master Mold is this masked mysterious character who claims to be EXPERIMENT X the FIRST mutant. No-one's ever heard of him but he has an incredible tale to tell. He also displays a shocking yet primal power when he raises Moira McTaggert from the dead and she tells the X-MEN some weird bad [redacted] about what's been going on.

Who knows what lies beneath the mask of Experiment X? A secret connected to the X-MEN's past? Or future? Will the self-styled MAN FROM ROOM X turn out to be hiding more than just his face? And will Wolverine's distrust be justified?

(You bet it will, buddy. The payoff on this is awesome! 'EXPERIMENT X' is MAGNETO, guys!!! Can we have Magneto masquerading as a member of the X-MEN for a year or eight months or whatever? And how cool will it be when he reveal himself and strikes? When it turns out he's been creating his own [redacted] Brotherhood of Mutants WITHIN the school by corrupting kids he's supposedly been teaching? As for Moira - Magneto took control of all the iron molecules in Moira's corpse and manipulated her like a ventriloquist's dummy to sow lies and seeds of confusion. This is one bad mother[redacted])

All this plus the greatest shock ending of the year after an X-MAN (Rogue?) dies - Jean Grey examining the first casualty's blood under the microscope finds something terrifying - there are millions of microscopic Sentinels seething in there, devastating cell structures. The X-MEN have been infected by tiny, lethal Sentinels!

Now read on...

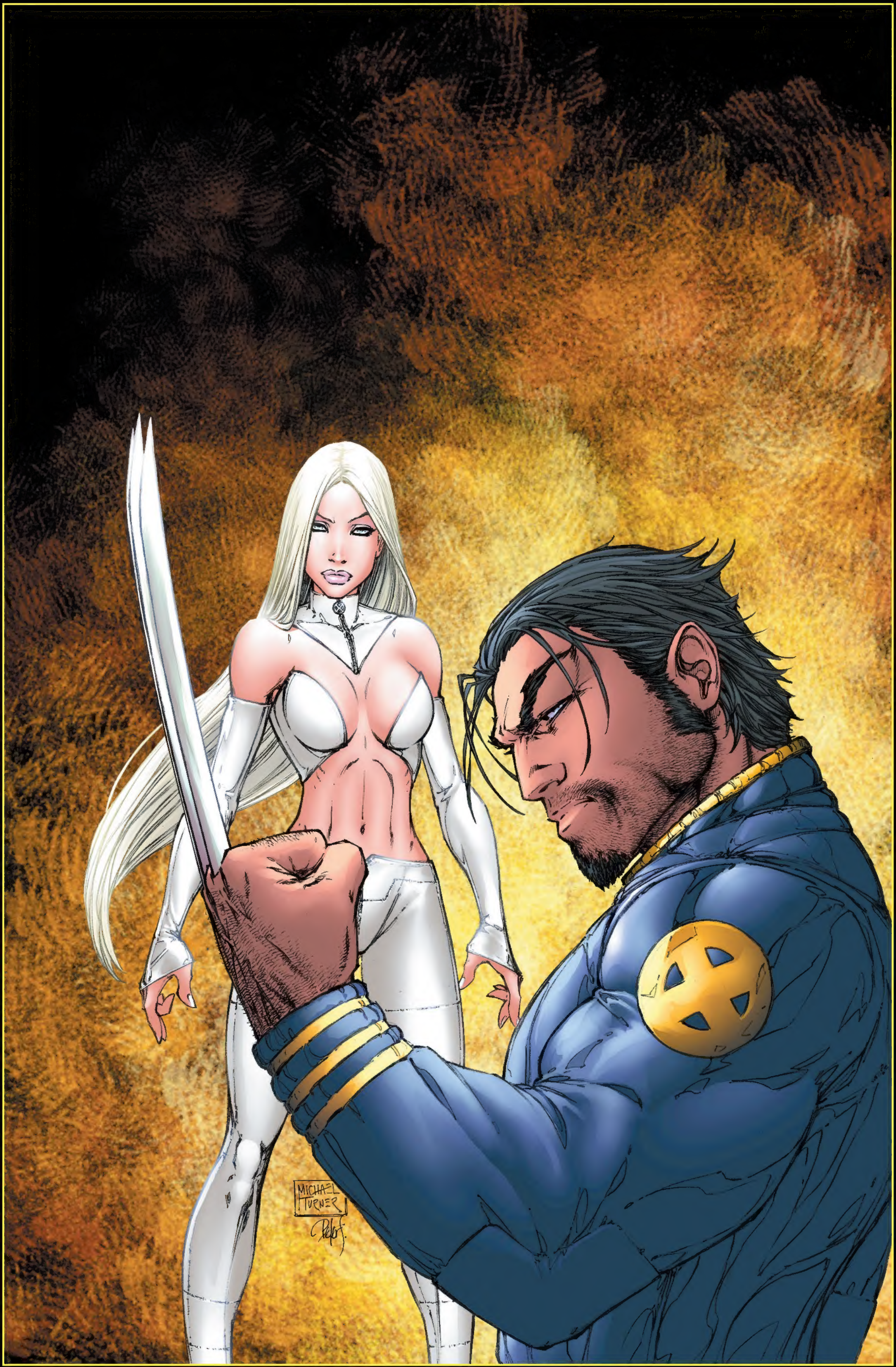
I have the whole first year mapped out: after this epic we have the return of Charlie X - who's fulfilled her objective and taken control of the Shi'ar Empire, only to reappear with warships AND the Imperial Guard to lay waste to the Earth! She's beaten by Experiment X just prior to the revelation of HIS true identity as we romp into the second year with the ultimate Magneto story!!!

As I said I'd like to kill Rogue and replace her later with another Rogue who's more like the Goth-y kid in the movie and the cartoon (the idea that a woman who can't touch anyone safely would have the self-confident, brash personality of a Southern sexbomb was always unconvincing). If we do it right we can have Gambit grief-stricken and out of the picture for a while, leading to a heartrending moment somewhere down the line when we do the story where Wolverine tracks LeBeau down and they sit in a bar to work it all out on the eve of destruction. Let's stir up the status quo a little and make things happen.

Basically, this is how I'd like to proceed. Keep it tight, fast and emotionally-engaging. With the right promotion, there's no reason why we can't push those sales figures back up into the troposphere again.

I'm ready if you are.

Grant/Joe/Pete --
I think we're all in agreement
that this is a great approach and
a great first arc. Our only worries
are small ones -- someone else to fulfill
Moira's role; getting more specific
w/ the cast.
I can't wait to see Quitely
draw all this!



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